

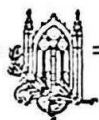
*Your*  
**STEWARDSHIP**  
*and Mine*

**S. A. WELLMAN**





*Your*  
STEWARDSHIP  
*and Mine*



ITS BLESSINGS and RESPONSIBILITIES

By S. A. WELLMAN



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# Introduction

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MAN'S natural selfishness leads him to appropriate to his own use every blessing that he receives. To the majority of mankind it seems entirely fitting that those things which they have obtained either through labor or through mental alertness should be lavished upon themselves or upon some other person whom they may choose to so honor. Few recognize that their ability to do, to acquire, to produce, to give, is wholly dependent upon One whom they either do not know or do not acknowledge, even though they may have heard of Him. Many, in fact, who pay lip service to the Creator fail to recognize any greater personal obligation to Him. Their relation to God begins, and often ends, with an occasional word of gratitude publicly expressed. Yet that word costs little effort and no real sacrifice. All too often it is the parallel of the child's thoughtless thank you at the behest of a fond parent.

Every human being, knowingly or unknowingly, is a steward upon whom God has bestowed His bounties and of whom He expects an acknowledgment of obligation through life, service, and sacrifice.

It is the purpose of this volume to present God's claims to our devotion, and to state the reasons why He who made all things can rightly expect us to make concrete acknowledgment of those claims. It is my purpose to illustrate from the Scriptures

as well as from human life and experience, not only the validity of the claim, but also its practical outworking.

Stewardship such as God has bestowed upon mankind embraces far more than a financial return to God of that which He justly claims of our material blessings. Stewardship embraces every relationship between God and man, and between man and his fellow man. When Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden, they were given definite stewardship over God's created works. The Lord "took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Gen. 2:15. When Cain in anger killed his brother Abel, God called him to account; and when Cain would have denied his stewardship, saying, "Am I my brother's keeper?" God put him in his place of responsible stewardship by saying, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." Cain was held responsible, as men have always been held responsible for the welfare of their fellow beings. Man is accountable to God for his part in the family, the community, the church, the nation, and even the world.

S. A. W.





"GOD is the giver of every good and perfect gift. Divine omnipotence furnishes the time, the energy, the talents, the food, and the multitudinous relationships that make up the life we live. These blessings or powers are furnished moment by moment, causing the individual to recognize the divine omnipotence of the constant and sustaining provider."—FREDERICK A. AGAR, *The Stewardship of Life*, p. 25.

"Since God is the source of all true knowledge, it is, as we have seen, the first object of education to direct our minds to His own revelation of Himself. Adam and Eve received knowledge through direct communion with God; and they learned of Him through His works. All created things, in their original perfection, were an expression of the thought of God. To Adam and Eve nature was teeming with divine wisdom. But by transgression man was cut off from learning of God through direct communion, and, to a great degree, through His works. The earth, marred and defiled by sin, reflects but dimly the Creator's glory. It is true that His object lessons are not obliterated. Upon every page of the great volume of His created works may still be traced His handwriting. Nature still speaks of her Creator. Yet these revelations are partial and imperfect. And in our fallen state, with weakened powers and restricted vision, we are incapable of interpreting aright. We need the fuller revelation of Himself that God has given in His written word."—*Education*, pp. 16, 17.

"An unseen hand guides the planets in their circuit of the heavens. A mysterious life pervades all nature,—a life that sustains the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity; that lives in the insect atom which floats in the summer breeze; that wings the flight of the swallow, and feeds the young ravens which cry; that brings the bud to blossom, and the flower to fruit. The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man."—*Ibid.*, p. 99.

# The Creator and Upholder of All

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GOD is the foundation of everything. All true science is in harmony with His works; all true education leads to obedience to His government. Science opens new wonders to our view; she soars high, and explores new depths; but she brings nothing from her research that conflicts with divine revelation. Ignorance may seek to support false views of God by appeals to science; but the book of nature and the written Word shed light upon each other. We are thus led to adore the Creator, and to have an intelligent trust in His Word.

"No finite mind can fully comprehend the existence, the power, the wisdom, or the works of the Infinite One. Says the sacred writer: 'Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.' Job 11:7-9. The mightiest intellects of earth cannot comprehend God. Men may be ever searching, ever learning, and still there is an infinity beyond."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 115, 116.

The psalmist tells us that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Ps. 24:1. All that we have, all that we see about us, all that men may claim as their own—the seas, the plains, the hills, and the lofty

mountains with their hidden wealth—belongs to Him. No man can lawfully lay claim to use these things as his own; nor can any group of men, any race or nation. And the same writer in the second verse states the reason: "For He *bath founded it* upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." The fact that God made the earth precludes its being the property of man, except as it is entrusted into man's hands by the One who made it.

When Nebuchadnezzar boasted of the might of his empire and of the kingdom that he had established, he used some very proud and self-exalting words, as have so many in this world who desire to lay claim to what their wisdom and their strength have drawn to them. The ancient king exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" Dan. 4:30. Once before similar words had gone forth from the king's lips. He had been warned of God by a dream, but human pride overcame him, and again there burst forth the vaunting claim to the mighty capital of the kingdom over which he ruled. He claimed it as his building. In the very moment of his self-exaltation he was called to account. "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee." Verse 31.

Seven years of living in the fields, wild, unkempt, and blank of mind, was the portion of the king; and then he was restored to his right mind again. At the end of those days he said, "I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" Verses 34, 35. Moreover, the king had learned another valuable lesson, and in the closing verse of the same chapter he exclaims,



"I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase." Verse 37.

No position of earthly power or wisdom or wealth can even faintly approach the power, wisdom, majesty, and unlimited resources of the God who made the heavens and the earth, and who has given to mankind that which he possesses in trust against the day when he must, like the ancient king, be called to give an account of his stewardship.

How simply the sweet singer of Israel describes the way in which the Lord created the world! Here is no philosophical dissertation, no display of wisdom in words which becloud the meaning. His statement is in words so simple that even a child can comprehend it. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. . . . For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Ps. 33:6-9. Men have woven a fanciful story about the creation of the world. They have endeavored to explain its origin by interpretation of the rocks, the fossils, and the deposits of minerals and metals hidden in the bowels of the earth; but they have rejected the simple statement of the Word. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1) is too simple to be believed, too direct to be worthy of acceptance. Yet some involved theory based on man's interpretation of that which is revealed but dimly in the surface of the earth is accepted as challenging the Biblical account. The simple record stands. It is the only logical explanation of the existence of this marvelous world in which we live—a world whose wonders are constantly unfolding before man's exploration and study. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."

Not alone does the Word witness to the origin of the world; it is equally clear and simple in its statement of ownership. Says the Lord through the psalmist, "Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is Mine and the

fulness thereof." Ps. 50:10-12. And through the prophet Haggai God declares, "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine." Haggai 2:8. David wonderfully and beautifully expresses the thought in prayer, as recorded in 1 Chronicles 29:11, 12: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in Thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all."

"All things are God's, not only by creation, but by redemption. All the blessings of this life and of the life to come, are delivered to us stamped with the cross of Calvary."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 362.

Some years ago I had opportunity to visit a mine from which gold was being removed by a difficult and laborious process. This precious metal had been discovered deep in the earth in a stratum of rock that ran obliquely down some six or seven thousand feet below the surface. Although hundreds of miles inland and at an altitude of five thousand feet above sea level, the shaft down which we traveled during our visit plunged straight on to the four-thousand-foot level (as low as the public was then permitted to descend) and other shafts were driven well below the level of the sea. From the four-thousand-foot level we were taken along a horizontal drift to where the vein of ore was being mined. Back in a chamber where one had to bend double to move about, almost naked laborers, recruited from the tribal areas farther inland, toiled and perspired to obtain the ore, the vein of which was only two to four feet thick. This vein must be drilled, blasted, cracked into smaller fragments, and dropped down the slanting chute to the next level, where it was loaded into cars and run to the lifts in the vertical shafts. Then it was hauled to the surface and to the stamping mills. There the ore was crushed to fine powder and run into vats which contained certain chemicals to separate the gold from the baser materials.

It was then made ready for the smelters. From a ton of ore four to six ounces of gold were extracted, or about  $1/6400$  of a ton.

For this paltry particle of dust men sweat and toil, suffer and sometimes die, contracting diseases of both body and soul. Yet all this wealth that lies hidden in the earth belongs to God, for "the silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine," saith the Lord.

On another occasion, in the same part of the world, I was invited to make a visit about midnight to an observatory established by the University of Michigan for the purpose of making charts of the Southern heavens. The scientists had then been busy at the task for six years, and still had considerable work to do to complete the charts. Men had been sent halfway round the world; an observatory equipped with a twenty-six-inch telescope had been built; night after night photographs had been taken; intricate calculations had been made, to obtain information of an authoritative nature for the further study of the heavens. While there, I gazed through the telescope at Mars and Jupiter in our own planetary system, at the great galaxy of stars known as the Milky Way, and eventually at a distant star that, to the eye unaided by the telescope, appeared to be one small star of lesser magnitude. The telescope had been pointed toward it, and to our amazement there appeared a host of sparkling gems, some large, some small, and that lone star, which had appeared so small to the naked eye, stood out a double star of great brilliance. The astronomer explained that in the field of vision then covered by the telescope, between four and six thousand stars had been counted. The space thus included was very limited, so countless millions of stars remained unseen. These stars are 22,500 light years away from our earth. We had seen but an infinitesimal part of God's great universe. He claims them all as His creation when He says, "He made the stars also." Gen. 1:16.

Man, according to the most recent releases of Government bureaus, hopes within a period of ten years to establish space islands, to land eventually on the moon in his efforts to reach other planets, and to solve the secrets of the heavenly bodies. Forgetful of another effort to reach into heaven, by means of a

tower, man seeks by his own wisdom and on his own initiative to solve the mysteries of the universe. The apostle Paul speaks of God's attitude toward the wisdom of this world. He says: "It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Cor. 1:19-21. May it not be that those whose wisdom has led them to search for the unsearchable, to seek to fathom the creation, and to delve into the secrets of the universe, are forgetting all the lessons of the past? May it not be that these searchers, if they forget the God who made the earth and who upholds it by the word of His power, are reaching forward unto that day when God says He will destroy all the ungodly and the unbelieving, when Christ will return to this earth in flaming fire to make an end of sin and sinners? Many even of the scientists of the day are warning that man is developing such engines of destruction that he may bring about his own annihilation and the end of the world as we now know it. The seer of Patmos, describing that day as he saw it in vision, says in the closing section of Revelation 6, "The great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Of that same time Paul also speaks: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. 1:8. Man's failure to recognize God's creative power, his pride in his own accomplishments, and his setting himself up, as did Satan in heaven, against the government of God are equivalent to saying, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will ascend above the height of the clouds; I will be like the most High." Isa. 14:13, 14.

( In man's failure to recognize his Creator, in his endeavor to exalt himself to the heights, lies his own sentence to destruction. Only as man acknowledges and lives as one of God's created



beings, seeking to keep in harmony with God's laws, does he show true wisdom, and only so can he preserve his heritage, his stewardship of the manifold gifts of God. *Proverbs*

### *The Father and the Son in Creation*

The work of creation was accomplished by God, the Father and the Son both taking an active part. The apostle Paul points us to our Creator in the following words expressing God's ownership: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him." Col. 1:15, 16.

In Genesis 1 we read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "God said, Let there be light." In verse 26, when we come to the crowning act of creation, the making of man, we read, "Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness. . . . So God created man." The inference is at once clear that God the Father was not alone in the work of creation. Someone was associated with Him, and all the Biblical evidence, including the word of John the apostle concerning Christ, bears this out. John says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:1-3, 14. According to Colossians 1:15 Christ is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." John says, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." So throughout the Bible the oneness of the Father and the Son in thought and action as well as in ownership is apparent. Therefore, wherever reference is made to the Creator, either in this volume or in the Word of God, it is safe to conclude that both God the Father and Christ the Son are

referred to, for "all things were created by Him, and for Him." Col. 1:16.

"The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate,—a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.' Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father,—one in nature, in character, in purpose,—the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. 'His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' Isa. 9:6. His 'goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.' Micah 5:2. And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: 'The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . . When He appointed the foundations of the earth, then was I by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.' Prov. 8:22-30.

"The Father wrought by His Son in the creation of all heavenly beings. 'By Him were all things created, . . . whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by Him, and for Him.' Col. 1:16. Angels are God's ministers, radiant with the light ever flowing from His presence, and speeding on rapid wing to execute His will. But the Son, the anointed of God, the 'express image of His person,' 'the brightness of His glory,' 'upholding all things by the word of His power,' holds supremacy over them all."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34.

### *The Dominion Entrusted to Man*

There was a divine purpose in the creation of man. He was placed on the newly created earth to "replenish the earth and subdue it"; to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon

the earth." Gen. 1:28. The same general thought is expressed by the psalmist: "Thou madest him [man] to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet." Ps. 8:6. Man, the ruler of the creatures on this earth, was placed in the beautiful surroundings of the Garden of Eden, the Paradise of God on earth, and this garden he was instructed to dress and to keep. (Gen. 2:15.) There was but one stipulation made as to his remaining in possession of this beautiful home and the vast realm of the earth. He must leave strictly alone the one tree in the garden of which the Lord had told him he must not eat, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For God said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Entire freedom of action, complete control of the creation of God, was in his hands as long as he hearkened unto the voice of God and obeyed His commands.

"God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of the divine government, and there can be no government without law. . . .

"God made man upright; He gave him noble traits of character, with no bias toward evil. He endowed him with high intellectual powers, and presented before him the strongest possible inducements to be true to his allegiance. Obedience, perfect and perpetual, was the condition of eternal happiness. On this condition he was to have access to the tree of life."—*Ibid.*, p. 49.

Should man betray his trust, he was to lose his dominion, forfeit his prospects of eternal life, and be cut off from direct communion with God. Death instead of eternal life would be his portion. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2:17. It was neither God's intention nor His desire that man should ever lose his inheritance. But the choice was left to man. He was created a free moral agent. He could choose to obey and live, or he could choose to disobey and die. His future would depend upon the choice he made.

How great was the trust given to Adam! All the earth was under his dominion and care. He might have developed a world that would have been the marvel of the universe. For a time he

dwelt in peace and security with all creation subject to him. No taint of sin marred the peace of Eden. But one day he who had sinned in heaven and had been cast out, who had accused God of injustice and arbitrary action there, invaded the home of our first parents. Adam and Eve had been warned.

"Heavenly messengers opened to them the history of Satan's fall, and his plots for their destruction, unfolding more fully the nature of the divine government, which the prince of evil was trying to overthrow. It was by disobedience to the just commands of God that Satan and his host had fallen. How important, then, that Adam and Eve should honor that law by which alone it was possible for order and equity to be maintained. . . .

"Like the angels, the dwellers in Eden had been placed upon probation; their happy estate could be maintained only on condition of fidelity to the Creator's law. They could obey and live, or disobey and perish. God had made them the recipients of rich blessings; but should they disregard His will, He who spared not the angels that sinned, could not spare them; transgression would forfeit His gifts, and bring upon them misery and ruin."—*Ibid.*, pp. 52, 53.

Throughout the history of the human race the experience of Adam and Eve has been, and will be, repeated. As they were made stewards of God, so every human being since their time has been made a steward of the grace and blessings of God. The same temptations that came to them come to us today. The same dangers pursue us.

"Satan represented to the holy pair that they would be gainers by breaking the law of God. Do we not to-day hear similar reasoning? Many talk of the narrowness of those who obey God's commandments, while they themselves claim to have broader ideas, and to enjoy greater liberty. What is this but an echo of the voice from Eden, 'In the day ye eat thereof'—transgress the divine requirement—'ye shall be as gods'? Satan claimed to have received great good by eating of the forbidden fruit, but he did not let it appear that by transgression he had become an outcast from heaven. Though he had found sin to result in infinite loss,

he concealed his own misery, in order to draw others into the same position. So now the transgressor seeks to disguise his true character; he may claim to be holy; but his exalted profession only makes him the more dangerous as a deceiver. He is on the side of Satan, trampling upon the law of God, and leading others to do the same, to their eternal ruin."—*Ibid.*, p. 55.

In the parable of the talents the nobleman who left his goods in the hands of his servants and went into a far country represents the Saviour. When our Lord returns to call His children He will require an accounting of every one to whom He has entrusted His goods. Every man's life and loyalty will be tested and measured by his strict obedience to God's instructions, by his diligent endeavors to be true to his responsibility as a steward. "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." 1 Cor. 4:2.

### *The Measure of a Man's Stewardship*

What, then, is the measure of a man's stewardship? No one will question that faithfulness is required. One cannot be a true steward and not be faithful. He who bears the name must not fail to measure up to the meaning of the word. Stewardship implies loyalty; it demands faithfulness, dependability, unbroken and constant service to one master. In the case of the Christian it anticipates implicit and instant obedience, as well as constancy and unswerving loyalty to our beloved Master, the Son of God.

The measure of that loyalty, although not defined fully, is stated in principle in the last part of verse 48 of the twelfth chapter of Luke: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." In the interrelationships of all mankind, when men are entrusted with responsibilities or talents, whatever the nature of the responsibilities or talents may be, the ones to whom they are given are expected to produce results commensurate with the importance of the gifts. Likewise, when God gives to us His blessings and bounties, not how little, but how much we can accomplish should occupy our attention.

"All men have been bought with an infinite price. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. Whether believers or unbelievers, all men are the Lord's property. All are called to do service for Him, and for the manner in which they have met this claim, all will be required to render an account at the great Judgment-day."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 326.

All men are God's creation. All were placed in this world on the same basis. All must account for their stewardship before the judgment seat of God, for to all He has given equal opportunity to serve Him through serving others and obeying His will.

The self-centered human heart invariably fails to recognize its obligation to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Man is the only part of God's creation that ever consciously fails to acknowledge God's ownership of all, and insists on living to himself.

"No bird that cleaves the air, no animal that moves upon the ground, but ministers to some other life. There is no leaf of the forest, or lowly blade of grass, but has its ministry. Every tree and shrub and leaf pours forth that element of life without which neither man nor animal could live; and man and animal, in turn, minister to the life of tree and shrub and leaf. The flowers breathe fragrance and unfold their beauty in blessing to the world. The sun sheds its light to gladden a thousand worlds. The ocean, itself the source of all our springs and fountains, receives the streams from every land, but takes to give. The mists ascending from its bosom fall in showers to water the earth, that it may bring forth and bud."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 20, 21.

In creating the earth and all that is therein, in providing the necessities of life for all mankind so that none need suffer, God has demonstrated His great love and care for His earthborn children. He sends His rain on the just and on the unjust. He seeks to win men from their rebellious or indifferent ways by His kindness and His long-suffering. He is not willing that any should perish, that even one should lose life eternal because he



fails of being a good steward of God's grace. Even when Adam, upon whom God had bestowed such great blessings and such power, disobeyed, God did not wholly cast him off, though He drove him from Eden and deprived him of the privilege of seeing and communing with his Maker face to face. God sent man forth to till the earth, which would thenceforth be cursed with thorns and thistles; and man must eat bread by the sweat of his face. At the same time God held out to Adam and all his heirs the promise that the day would come when the Seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, and Satan would become a conquered foe.

During all the centuries since, God has sought to bless the earth and win back to Himself His creation. Through patriarch and prophet, through apostle, teacher, and evangelist, and through the daily life and example of humble laymen God has sought to turn the tide of sin and transgression. In the time of ancient Israel, when they had sinned, Samuel, as a good steward of God, seeking to win their full and unqualified allegiance, pleaded, "Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things He hath done for you." 1 Sam. 12:24.

Creator, Upholder, Counselor, Redeemer, Friend—He is our God and Saviour. Since the hour He created man God has watched over His creation. His heart has been pained by man's rebellions; He has at times repented that He has intervened in man's behalf; He nonetheless kept not back His only begotten Son but sent Him to those whom He had entrusted with His goods, and in whom He had so often been disappointed; so that, if by any means, regardless of the sacrifice entailed, men might again be won back to Him.

How great things He hath done for us! How great is the debt we owe Him! "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Let us serve Him in truth with all the heart.

"God did not design that His people should build up a wall of partition between themselves and their fellow-men. The heart of Infinite Love was reaching out toward all the inhabitants of the earth. Though they had rejected Him, He was constantly seeking to reveal Himself to them, and make them partakers of His love and grace. His blessing was granted to the chosen people, that they might bless others.

"God called Abraham, and prospered and honored him; and the patriarch's fidelity was a light to the people in all the countries of his sojourn. Abraham did not shut himself away from the people around him. He maintained friendly relations with the kings of the surrounding nations, by some of whom he was treated with great respect; and his integrity and unselfishness, his valor and benevolence, were representing the character of God. . . .

"God called Israel, and blessed and exalted them, not that by obedience to His law they alone might receive His favor, and become the exclusive recipients of His blessings, but in order to reveal Himself through them to all the inhabitants of the earth. It was for the accomplishment of this very purpose that He commanded them to keep themselves distinct from the idolatrous nations around them. . . .

"God did not intend that His people, in self-righteous exclusiveness, should shut themselves away from the world, so that they could have no influence upon it.

"Like their Master, the followers of Christ in every age were to be the light of the world."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 368, 369.

# Ancient Israel's Call to Service

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EVERYTHING in God's universe ministers to some other thing. The angelic hosts are ministers of God, "that do His pleasure." Ps. 103:21. They hearken to the voice of His Word. (Verse 20.) They do His commandments. How vast is the scope of their selfless service! (See Heb. 1:14.) And this inherent attribute will be manifest in the lives of all who call themselves sons and daughters of God through faith in Jesus Christ. "The law of service becomes the connecting link which binds us to God and to our fellow-men."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 326.

The divine purpose in creation included sons and daughters, partakers of the divine nature and under God's instruction, perfecting a character in God's likeness. (Gen. 1:26, 27; Isa. 45:18.) The entrance of sin into the new creation marred the plan and delayed its fulfillment, but did not change it. All that was lost in Adam was, through God's grace, restored in Christ. Sinners converted become a "new creation." 2 Cor. 5:17, A.R.V., margin. (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:9, 10.) This was the gospel message given to Israel in the testimonies and symbolism revealed to patriarchs and prophets.

"Even before He took humanity upon Him, He saw the whole length of the path He must travel in order to save that which was lost. Every pang that rent His heart, every insult that

was heaped upon His head, every privation that He was called to endure, was open to His view before He laid aside His crown and royal robe, and stepped down from the throne, to clothe His divinity with humanity. The path from the manger to Calvary was all before His eyes. He knew the anguish that would come upon Him. He knew it all, and yet He said, 'Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart.' Ps. 40:7, 8."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 410.

Let us briefly review God's plan for humanity from before the creation of the earth to the call and establishment of Israel as a nation. The apostle to the Gentiles states that plan in his letter to the Ephesians: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Eph. 1:4. In choosing men to serve Him as His stewards, even from the very beginning of time, God desired that the life and example of His chosen ones should be such as to set before others the blameless and holy character of Heaven.

But man fell by the sophistries of Satan. In yielding to the enchanting theories of the evil one, man came under his control. "For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." 2 Peter 2:19.

"Not only man but the earth had by sin come under the power of the wicked one, and was to be restored by the plan of redemption. . . . When man became Satan's captive, the dominion which he held, passed to his conqueror. Thus Satan became 'the god of this world.' 2 Cor. 4:4. He had usurped that dominion over the earth which had been originally given to Adam."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 67.

The departure from strict obedience to the requirements of God by Adam and Eve, while still in the Garden of Eden, was quickly followed by disobedience in their posterity. Cain, unwilling to carry out the plan of offerings which recognized the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, substituted his own offer-

ing. This being rejected, while his brother's sacrifice of a lamb was accepted, Cain rose up and slew Abel.

"These brothers were tested, as Adam had been tested before them, to prove whether they would believe and obey the word of God. They were acquainted with the provision made for the salvation of man, and understood the system of offerings which God had ordained. They knew that in these offerings they were to express faith in the Saviour whom the offerings typified, and at the same time to acknowledge their total dependence on Him for pardon; and they knew that by thus conforming to the divine plan for their redemption, they were giving proof of their obedience to the will of God."—*Ibid.*, p. 71.

Yet in that hour that brought home to the first family of earth the personal knowledge of death, God reminded Cain of his duty as his brother's keeper. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me," said the Lord. The cruel reign of sin was under way, and it was to continue unabated till God destroyed the earth and its inhabitants with a flood. Few indeed remained true to God.

"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them." Gen. 6:5-7.

### *The Rebirth of the World*

As Noah and his family came forth from the ark they beheld a devastated world wherein to begin life anew. Yet this man of faith—who had preached and lived and builded in preparation for the Flood for 120 years, a living witness and a loyal follower of God—"builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar." Gen. 8:20. Out of the meager stock of clean animals and

fowls that must be the progenitors of the animal kingdom, Noah sacrificed in grateful acknowledgment to the God whom he worshiped and in whose promises he had supreme confidence. After the Flood, as before, Noah stood unmoved and unshaken in his trust and confidence in God's plans and leadings.

"In the joy of their release, Noah did not forget Him by whose gracious care they had been preserved. His first act after leaving the ark was to build an altar, and offer from every kind of clean beast and fowl a sacrifice, thus manifesting his gratitude to God for deliverance, and his faith in Christ, the great sacrifice. This offering was pleasing to the Lord; and a blessing resulted, not only to the patriarch and his family, but to all who should live upon the earth."—*Ibid.*, p. 105.

The intervening years from Noah to Abraham saw the race of men again losing their way. Disobeying the clear instruction of God, they set themselves in rebellion against Him and denied their obligations to Him. The creature was worshiped and served rather than the Creator. The story of the Flood had not been forgotten. In their supposed wisdom and power they determined to circumvent a recurrence of that disaster. On the plains of Shinar the people began to build a city and a tower whose top, they thought, might reach to heaven. The Lord, the record in Genesis tells us (Gen. 11:1-9), came down and there confounded their language, "and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." Verse 9.

### *The Call of Abram and of Israel*

It was from among the descendants of Shem, one of the sons of Noah, that God called Abram, "the father of the faithful." In Ur of the Chaldees, Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Under divine direction Terah, Abram, Abram's wife Sarai, and Lot, the son of Haran, who died in Ur, set out for Canaan; but they stopped and dwelt in Haran till after the death of Terah. Then again God spoke to Abram and said to him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." Gen. 12:1.



In calling Abram, God made definite promises to him. "I will make of thee a great nation," He said, "and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: . . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Verses 2, 3. This call to Abram was not made to him alone. God made him the founder of a great nation, because He desired to make of that nation an example in character, in spiritual power, in obedience; a nation that would lead all nations to a knowledge of God, of His love, of His kindness, of His justice, and of His hatred of all that was evil. Out of that nation was to come the world's Redeemer; and although Israel as a nation should fail to become the blessing that she was intended to be, from her should come forth the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. He would bring salvation to everyone who would believe on Him.

In writing to Timothy the apostle Paul expressed God's plan for all spiritual Israel in this manner: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. 1:9.

Anciently God's call to Abram revealed His purpose to establish a new nation in him and to give him and all his spiritual heirs freely of His grace, so that they might become a blessing to the world that had completely forgotten God. Paul, in speaking to the Athenians on Mars' Hill, recognized that they were religious and highly educated, and were great philosophers and logicians; and he said to them: "I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be

not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:23-28.

Paul had a true vision of the fullness of the call of Israel to the service of God. It was to this call that God had reference when He told Abraham that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed. Israel was to become a light to the heathen to guide them back to God.

### *Abraham Acknowledges the Tithing Obligation*

Reverting to Abraham as the father of those who are faithful, we find that he provided us with our first example of tithing. Lot and his family—who had settled in the plains country about Sodom, because of the excellent pastures there and the attractions of the urban location—were, with all the inhabitants of Sodom and their flocks and herds, captured by Chedorlaomer and allied kings, and taken toward the north country. Some who escaped brought the news to Abraham. Gathering his retainers about him, some three hundred in number, and arming them, he set out in pursuit of the marauders, and overtook and defeated them to the west of Damascus. On his way home he was met by Melchizedek, king of Salem, and the record tells us that he paid "him tithes of all." Although love, loyalty, and faithfulness in life and service had been mentioned often in the earlier record, here occurs a specific instance of material and financial obligation to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. (Gen. 14:17-20.)

That the principle of tithing was known and practiced by the descendants of Abraham is evident also from the experience of Jacob as he fled from the wrath of his brother Esau. He was on his way to the house of Bethuel, his mother's father, in Padan-aram. (Gen. 28:1-5.) En route he slept at Beersheba with a stone for a pillow. He dreamed of seeing a ladder stretched from earth to heaven, on which angels of God ascended and descended, while above it stood the Lord, who spoke to him and made him the same promises that He had made to Abraham, his grandfather.

When Jacob awakened from this dream he exclaimed, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." "If God will

be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." Verses 16-22.

Though Jacob was far from perfect in his life and character, he sought to keep his vow in the afteryears and to guide his household in service and loyalty to Jehovah. The story of his life, with its imperfections and its times of high resolve and of character transformation, is one to inspire confidence in God's dealings with those who seek to do His will today. Jacob's disappointments and heartaches, as well as his decisive victories, his faith in the ultimate fulfillment of all God's promises while as yet he and his family led a nomadic life in Canaan, witnessed to God's just and loving dealings with all His children. His sorrow at the supposed death of his son Joseph, and his ultimate discovery of the much-loved son, through the vicissitudes of famine, enthroned as one of the principal rulers of the great land of Egypt, were a part of the life pattern that God wove for him as a steward of His grace. Even his death in Egypt and his burial in Canaan in the sepulcher of his fathers gave witness to the leadership of Jehovah in his life. His life and loyalty set the standard followed by the faithful in Israel in succeeding generations. "Our father Jacob" runs through the history of that people in all the centuries that followed.

### *The Broader Implications of God's Call to Israel*

God's call to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their immediate descendants was not fully understood by them. God had a broader purpose than merely to establish a new family, a great nation, or even a national religion. God's purpose was to separate from the ungodly a people who would witness to His love for mankind—a love that would bring manifold blessings, temporal and spiritual, upon the entire world. Lost in sin and transgression, far from God, without comprehension of His character or knowledge

of His existence, the world needed the witness of those who had truly found Him. God called Israel to this task.

Through the prophet Isaiah He states the call He made. "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am He; and there is none that can deliver out of My hand: I will work, and who shall let [hinder] it." Isa. 43:10-13.

From the very earliest days of Israel's existence as a nation, at the time of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, when, as an independent people, they set forth to conquer and occupy the Promised Land, God had honored them by publicly assuring them of His approval and His watchcare. Said the Lord: "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in His ways, and to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and to hearken unto His voice: and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people, as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all His commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as He hath spoken." Deut. 26:17-19.

"God did not design that His people should build up a wall of partition between themselves and their fellow-men. The heart of Infinite Love was reaching out toward all the inhabitants of earth. Though they had rejected Him, He was constantly seeking to reveal Himself to them, and make them partakers of His love and grace. His blessing was granted to the chosen people, that they might bless others. . . .

"God called Israel, and blessed and exalted them, not that by obedience to His law they alone might receive His favor, and become the exclusive recipients of His blessings, but in order to

reveal Himself through them to all the inhabitants of the earth. It was for the accomplishment of this very purpose that He commanded them to keep themselves distinct from the idolatrous nations around them."—*Ibid.*, pp. 368, 369.

Wherein were they to be witnesses for God? What would give evidence to the world about them that they were indeed God's children? "Wherein shall it be known here that I [Moses] and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." Ex. 33:16. God's presence with them, His power sustaining them, His character portrayed through them—these were to be the evidences, the witness to the world, of God's character, His power, and His majesty. "No earthly power or skill or learning can supply the place of God's abiding presence."—*Ibid.*, p. 328. God's character, seen in the lives of His people, would draw men to Him and cause them to identify themselves with Israel.

### *Through Israel to God*

It was God's earnest desire that the nations among whom Israel dwelt should be drawn to Him, not that Israel should in any way unite with the nations. There is a radical difference between these two unions. The one would be the uniting of the former heathen with the followers of the true God by an acceptance of God as their God, His laws as the rule of their lives, His character as the aim of their own strivings in character formation, His children to be their brethren and sisters in every holy calling. They would be transformed individuals, forsaking their past way of living, identifying themselves with the people of God, and sharing in every divine activity.

Under no circumstances was Israel to make covenants with them as heathen, to permit intimate social association with them that certainly would result in intermarriage of their sons and their daughters; for, said the Lord, "they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly."

Deut. 7:4. And this last is exactly what happened. So long as Israel kept themselves free from entanglements with the heathen, God blessed and prospered them, their worship remained pure, their lives holy, and their power to draw others to God made them an influence for good. If a stranger desired to partake of their holy feasts or if a servant or slave wished to have a part in the Passover, he must first join God's people, accept circumcision as the sign of his new relationship, and accept Jehovah as his God. Then and then only was he to be accepted "as one that is born in the land. . . . One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you." Ex. 12:48, 49. But until the stranger accepted the status of one who belonged to Israel, in other words, was converted to the faith of Israel and received as a member of the family of God, he was regarded as a Gentile, without legal status in the nation. Yet no one was to be refused admission, or be regarded as untouchable or outcast, provided he willingly identified himself fully with the children of God.

One of the main provisions made concerning all who should be counted as members of Israel was that the Sabbath should be strictly observed by every member of the household—son, daughter, manservant, maidservant, and the stranger also that was within their gates; and all were to see that their domestic animals were not employed in labor on that day. (Ex. 20:10.) The observance of the Sabbath set the seal upon the keeping of all the law of God. When such loyalty was manifested, "the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." Lev. 19:34.

"God had made provision that all who would renounce heathenism, and connect themselves with Israel, should share the blessings of the covenant. They were included under the term, 'the stranger that sojourneth among you,' and with few exceptions this class were to enjoy equal favors and privileges with Israel."—*Ibid.*, p. 507.

Had Israel elected to obey God's voice indeed and to keep His covenant, they would have become, and remained, a peculiar treasure unto God above all people. (Ex. 19:5.) At various times in their history this was true concerning their status, and these eras marked them as outstanding among the nations—"a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Verse 6. It was during these periods that God blessed them with prosperity, protected them against the inroads of their enemies, and exalted them among the nations. As He had promised, they became the head and not the tail.

"It was in order that the Israelites might be a blessing to the nations, and that God's name might be made known 'throughout all the earth,' that they were delivered from Egyptian bondage. If obedient to His requirements, they were to be placed far in advance of other peoples in wisdom and understanding; but this supremacy was to be reached and maintained only in order that through them the purpose of God for 'all the nations of the earth' might be fulfilled."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 368, 369. Red sea etc. Basins

Unfortunately, throughout the national existence of Israel there were such radical departures from their allegiance to God and His laws that the nation suffered disastrously for their disloyalty. The truth of God, instead of being exalted before the heathen, was disgraced; and the Israelites were often defied and conquered by their heathen enemies. When the people of God of any age or nationality fail to measure up to their responsibilities; when they lower the standards established by God for the control of their lives, and seek instead to copy the ways of the world and to love the world more than they love and serve the Most High, they dishonor their Maker, and bring sorrow and disaster to themselves.

Some years ago while traveling abroad I met a brilliant young Hebrew, who had chosen to leave the land of his birth because of the restrictions and persecutions imposed upon his people by the inhabitants of that land. In another country he hoped to re-establish himself and follow his chosen profession of law. He was discouraged and disillusioned by what he had been through,



and expressed his inability to understand why his people through the years had been compelled to undergo such hardships, so many of them suffering severely at the hands of others. As the existing situation was discussed between us, and as our regrets were expressed that such conditions could obtain in a civilization that claimed to be the highest, I pointed to some of those texts in the major and minor prophets which told of the sufferings that would come to Israel if they were disobedient and did not follow the instruction that God had given them. Even as far back as the days of Moses they were told, "If ye walk contrary unto Me, and will not hearken unto Me," "I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out the sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste." Lev. 26:21, 33. In Ezekiel's day God again warned them through the prophet, saying, "They shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries." Eze. 12:15. Zechariah declares that because of the evil course pursued by Israel, because their hearts were as an adamant stone, "I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate." Zech. 7:14. My friend expressed his surprise, said he had never studied these things, and promised that he would read the prophecies concerning his people.

Nor is disloyalty to the principles of God's kingdom confined to the Hebrew people. That same spirit of indifference and disloyalty is found in the ranks of those who profess to be God's children today. Nor can the results be otherwise now than they have been with Israel through the centuries. Only as fullness of devotion, faithfulness, and obedience are manifested by the people of this age who profess to be God's followers, can they expect to be blessed by their Creator. Today, as always, disobedience and unfaithfulness will bring a harvest of trouble.

Let us who read take warning from these experiences and these prophecies. Although we may not be of the Hebrew race, if we are Christ's true followers, if we follow His example, if

we practice His teachings and show His love for righteousness and for our fellow men and their salvation, we are "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29. We can enjoy God's blessing, and be a holy people only as we carry out the will of God and love Him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength.

"WE do not know what great interests may be at stake in the proving of God. There is no safety except in strict obedience to the word of God. All His promises are made upon condition of faith and obedience, and a failure to comply with His commands cuts off the fulfillment to us of the rich provisions of the Scriptures. We should not follow impulse, nor rely on the judgment of men; we should look to the revealed will of God, and walk according to His definite commandment, no matter what circumstances may surround us. God will take care of the results; by faithfulness to His word we may in time of trial prove before men and angels that the Lord can trust us in difficult places to carry out His will, honor His name, and bless His people."

"Many look back to the Israelites, and marvel at their unbelief and murmuring, feeling that they themselves would not have been so ungrateful; but when their faith is tested, even by little trials, they manifest no more faith or patience than did ancient Israel. When brought into strait places, they murmur at the process by which God has chosen to purify them. Though their present needs are supplied, many are unwilling to trust God for the future, and they are in constant anxiety lest poverty shall come upon them, and their children shall be left to suffer. Some are always anticipating evil, or magnifying the difficulties that really exist, so that their eyes are blinded to the many blessings which demand their gratitude. The obstacles they encounter, instead of leading them to seek help from God, the only source of strength, separate them from Him, because they awaken unrest and repining."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 621, 622, 293, 294.

# A Spiritual Stewardship Neglected

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REPEATEDLY the Lord Jehovah laid before His people Israel what was in store for them in temporal and spiritual blessings if they would only be obedient and carry out His will. Perhaps no more beautiful passage of Scripture is recorded than that in Deuteronomy 28:10-13 in which the Lord says to Israel: "All the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them."

It is to be noted that in every case in which the Lord makes these outstanding promises to His people, they are made on condition—that they should observe and do all that He had commanded them. It is "if thou hearken" and "observe" and "do." God does not promise special favors to those who rebel against

Him. It is true that He causes His rain to fall on the just and on the unjust. These are the blessings that come to all men. But to His chosen people, to those who have decided in their hearts to be obedient and to follow in His footprints, He pours out in abundant blessings the resources of heaven.

Early in the conquest of Canaan, God gave an illustration of the choice that would be made by the stranger, the Gentile, or the heathen, in the nations around them. The tribes of Canaan had witnessed the miraculous march of the hundreds of thousands of Israel through the desert country of the Sinai Peninsula and the constant miracle of their being fed and protected; and the fear of them had penetrated to the remotest village of Canaan. The nations that had for many years occupied the land were idolaters, yet they knew that the God of Israel had led that nation of slaves out of Egypt with "a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm." Had they welcomed Israel and sought to know the God who was leading them, had they been willing to become acquainted with the Source of Israel's power and to accept Him as their God, they would have been spared and received in Israel. But almost without exception, as nations, they opposed and fought with Israel; and as long as Israel remained faithful to God Israel triumphed. These nations might have found favor with Israel, and with God, even as did Rahab, who gave refuge to the Israelitish spies who were sent into Jericho. She and all her house were saved when the city fell to the hosts of Israel. Rahab was a heathen, but when she chose to cast in her lot with the people of God, she was adopted into the Israel of God, and became one of the ancestors of David; and through him, of the Messiah. This experience is but an isolated indication of what God would have done for all the people of Canaan had they willingly chosen to serve Him.

For a time after the conquest of Canaan, Israel, in the main, faithfully served the Lord. "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that He had done for Israel." Joshua 24:31. But this situation changed after

the death of those who had seen the mighty works of God in the conquest of Canaan. Such has always been the trend of the human heart in its relation to God. In its selfishness and its pride of accomplishment the glory for what is done is given to the individual, the community, or the nation; and God is left entirely out of man's reckoning. This was so with Israel. We read: "All that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth." Judges 2: 10-13.

To know something of the revolutionary change that had taken place in their lives, let us study the depths to which they had sunk. Baal and Ashtaroth were the male and female deities of the Phoenician nations, and the worship of the deities had spread throughout the Canaanitish nations in the time of Israel. This idol worship was introduced into Israel under the instruction of Balaam, who, when he failed to curse Israel, but was desirous of the rewards offered by Balak, finally counseled the seduction of the people of Israel. The worship of Baal was often accompanied by lewd and lascivious ceremonies, and to this god were sometimes offered human sacrifices. The priests of the cult danced with frantic shouts around the altar and cut themselves with knives to excite the attention and compassion of the god. (1 Kings 18:26-28.)

The punishment that followed the evil course of Israel in turning to the worship of Baal-peor in the days of Moses (Num. 25:1-9) should have been sufficient warning; but after the death of Moses and Joshua and the elders that had seen the providential leadings of God through the wilderness and the conquest of Canaan, the people rapidly changed their attitude, and adopted

the ways of the heathen about them, until "the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and He said, Because that this people hath transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto My voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein as their fathers did keep it, or not. Therefore the Lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered He them into the hand of Joshua." Judges 2:20-23.

Instead of a country wholly cleared of idolatry and idolaters, as God had planned for the children of Israel; instead of a nation set at the crossroads of the world, free from the contaminating influences of heathen surroundings, and standing out before the world as an example of the spiritual power that comes with loyalty to God, Israel was left with a situation that was a constant temptation and snare to them. Yet even under these conditions, had Israel been true to her calling and to the laws of the Lord, He could have made her a "light to lighten the Gentiles" and a leaven of righteousness in the midst of the darkness that surrounded them. Instead, almost the entire nation continued in their rebellious course, only to be warned and punished for the evil of their doings. These conditions continued through the days of the judges, through the days of Samuel the prophet, and into the days of the kingdom. In the times of Saul and David improvements were seen, and with the establishment of the Temple service in Solomon's time, it seemed that a new day had dawned.

### *God's Power Manifested at the Dedication of the Temple*

In the reign of David, filled as it was with wars and the extension of the power and might of Israel from the borders of Egypt to Damascus in Syria, plans were laid for the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. David was not permitted to carry out his plans, but was told to leave the completion of the Temple to his son Solomon. When Solomon ascended the throne he was young but humble, and he took up his duties as the sovereign of Israel

with entire dependence upon God. His prayers and his decisions all indicate that he realized his personal need of the guidance of the divine mind. God gave him the wisdom that he craved, and laid upon him the burden of erecting a house of worship that would be the center of all the religious activities of the nation. As a result, the most beautiful and magnificent building ever known in Israel was erected, and the wealth of the kingdom was lavished in its erection. When the Temple was ready for dedication a call was made for the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes, and the chief of the fathers to come unto Jerusalem to bring the ark of the covenant out of the city of David (Zion). This was done, and with the ark were brought all the holy vessels of the tabernacle. The priests and Levites, all that were found for the work, were sanctified, and did not wait by course on that occasion. The singers were among them, arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps; and 120 priests with trumpets stood at the east end of the altar. They began to praise the Lord with voice and instruments of music, saying, "He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever." "Then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." 2 Chron. 5:13, 14. God accepted the Temple as His dwelling place. His holy presence surrounded the ark in the most holy place, and here in the succeeding years the high priest ministered as directed until the destruction of the Temple and the captivity of the people of God.

The record further tells us that when Solomon had made an end of praying, "the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever." 2 Chron. 7:1-3.



Israel's responsibility for the stranger was recognized in Solomon's prayer as he asked, "Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of Thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for Thy name's sake; (for they shall hear of Thy great name, and of Thy strong hand, and of Thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house; hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger call-eth to Thee for: that all people of the earth may know Thy name, to fear Thee, as do Thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by Thy name." 1 Kings 8:41-43. In this prayer Solomon reiterates the principles laid down to Israel when they were called to represent God as His chosen people. The same principles have been the guiding light of all God's children through the ages. Not only are they called for their own salvation, but also in order that they may be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to bring men back to their true relation to the God of heaven. That principle has never changed, nor will it change till the work of God for man is finished. God desires the salvation of all. His goodness and love reach out to everyone. The human witnesses whom He has called to His service are links in His chain of love to draw men to Him.

### *Apostasy Leads to the Captivity*

Before Solomon died, he, who had led out in the dedication of the Temple to the service of God, who had prayed so eloquently for God's people and for the stranger that should seek God and His service, lost his own way and was led by his wives into idolatry. The record says, "Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab. . . . And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods." 1 Kings 11:6-8. As a result of this evil course Solomon was plagued in his later life by uprisings and by attacks from without; and the Lord corrected him, saying, "Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept My covenant and My statutes,

which I commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant." Verse 11. For David's sake God did not bring the division of the kingdom until Solomon's death, though adversaries plagued him from Edom and Damascus and from among his own servants. (Verses 14-43.)

Under the divided kingdom the ten tribes and their rulers were for the most part leaders in idolatry, and the kingdom of Israel rarely stood for the worship of Jehovah, having lost all sense of responsibility for witnessing to the world around them.

When Jeroboam led out in rebellion, taking the ten tribes with him, and establishing his house in Shechem and Penuel, he began to fear that if the people of Israel should go up to Jerusalem to worship, they would be gradually weaned away from allegiance to him. Therefore, he made two calves of gold and set them up, one in Bethel and the other in Dan, saying to the people, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." 1 Kings 12:28. Jeroboam went even further than this. He established a house of high places, took from the lowest of the people for priests, and appointed feast days for the new gods. This set the trend away from God, and after many vicissitudes, Israel's idolatrous course came to its culmination in the captivity of the ten tribes. This had been prophesied again and again as the ultimate result of apostasy; then followed warning after warning in attacks upon the kingdom and loss of territory. Sometimes when Israel repented and temporarily sought to serve the Lord, He delivered them from their enemies. Yet the prophet Hosea stated of them, "Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer. . . . Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Hosea 4:16, 17. And Amos, prophesying, says, "Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land." Amos 7:11.

Of this period the Spirit of prophecy says: "From the time of Jeroboam's death to Elijah's appearance before Ahab, the people of Israel suffered a steady spiritual decline. Ruled by men who did not fear Jehovah and who encouraged strange forms of worship, the larger number of the people rapidly lost sight of

their duty to serve the living God, and adopted many of the practices of idolatry."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 109.

Judah, in common with Israel, had suffered the results of this national apostasy, and some years after the fall of Israel (2 Kings 17:6-23), we are told, "the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged." "And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land." 2 Kings 24:10, 14. When Jerusalem was captured and the king and the people taken captive, "Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon," came "unto Jerusalem: and he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And . . . brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about." 2 Kings 25:8-10. The poor were left as vinedressers and husbandmen. The chief priest, the second priest, and the principal scribe, together with three-score leaders of the people, were brought before Nebuchadnezzar; and he slew them in Riblah in the land of Hamath. And the record ends, "So Judah was carried away out of their land." 2 Kings 25:21.

God's remembrance of, and His care for, His chosen people did not end in their captivity. They were severely punished, but the very punishment itself was the means of bringing a knowledge of the true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, to the king of Babylon. Among the captives who had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar were some of the young men of the best families of Israel, young men who had been brought up in godly homes and had been taught to revere and obey their Lord. By their loyalty to principle, their faithfulness and devotion to duty, and their wisdom and sagacity these young men set an example that gained the attention and favor of their captors, and made it possible, under the blessing and in the providence of God, for them to rise to the rulership of the kingdom under Nebuchadnezzar.

Great as was Nebuchadnezzar, mighty as were his conquests,

and magnificent as was the city of Babylon that he had built and the empire that he had founded, the humble captives from Judea were able to lead him to accept the God of heaven and of earth. Twice God spoke to him in a dream, which Daniel interpreted. At the last, after suffering loss of mind and kingdom for seven years, as God had warned him through Daniel, at the end of the days his understanding returned, and he "blessed the most High." In final acknowledgment of God's rulership he exclaimed, "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase." Dan. 4:37. What Israel had failed to do in their own land, some of her sons had done while in captivity. In the meanwhile thousands in Israel were learning that their only safety and their only hope of returning to the Land of Promise lay in the full surrender and dedication of their lives to God. They mourned the sins that had brought about their captivity; they wept beside the rivers of Babylon and prayed for the day when they could return to Canaan.

God was preparing to give them another opportunity to carry out His will and to witness for Him before the nations. He had promised that at the end of seventy years they should return to Jerusalem. (Jer. 25:11, 12.) As they studied the prophecies of their return to the Promised Land, their hopes grew; and when the appointed time arrived God brought Cyrus the Persian into power, of whom He had said many years before, "He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid." Isa. 44:28. "In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, . . . The Lord God of heaven . . . hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem." Ezra 1:1, 2. The hour had come for Israel to be restored to the Promised Land. Many of the faithful made prepa-

rations to go under the leadership of Zerubbabel. Many had become so tied to the land of their exile that they failed to take advantage of the call to return. It meant starting anew and pioneering the way, but those who believed God's Word and accepted His promises left for the land of their fathers.

The same weaknesses that had beset the Israelites' paths before the exile plagued their lives in the Promised Land. But they had learned many valuable lessons. Their leaders were zealous for the God of heaven. They sincerely and courageously brought before the people the laws and statutes of the Lord, and insisted on strict adherence to them. In 457 B.C., Artaxerxes, then the king of Persia, gave a letter to "Ezra the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of His statutes to Israel." Ezra 7:11. Into the hands of Ezra the Persian king gave full authority. He gave him authority to use the tax money of the kingdom to rebuild the Temple and the city, and to appoint judges and magistrates over the people.

To ensure that Israel would not again lose sight of the importance of keeping all the law of the Lord, Ezra gathered them at the water gate, and for hours read to them the laws of God, and "the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." Neh. 8:3.

When the book of the law was read great care was taken to read distinctly and to give the sense to every portion so that those listening could understand the reading. (Verse 8.) Of the results of this study we are told:

"Wherever Ezra labored, there sprang up a revival in the study of the Holy Scriptures. Teachers were appointed to instruct the people; the law of the Lord was exalted and made honorable. The books of the prophets were searched, and the passages foretelling the coming of the Messiah brought hope and comfort to many a sad and weary heart.

"More than two thousand years have passed since Ezra 'prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it' (Ezra 7:10); yet the lapse of time has not lessened the influence of his pious example. Through the centuries, the record of his life of

consecration has inspired many with the determination 'to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it.'

"Ezra's motives were high and holy; in all that he did, he was actuated by a deep love for souls. The compassion and tenderness that he revealed toward those who had sinned, either willfully or through ignorance, should be an object lesson to all who seek to bring about reforms."—*Ibid.*, p. 623.

The spirit that inspired Ezra of old is that which, through the centuries, God has sought to implant in the hearts of all the leaders of His people and through them to reach the hearts of the people. Had Israel been thus led, the purpose of God to make His chosen people "a light to lighten the Gentiles," a blessing to all the world, would have been fulfilled.

### *The Results of Ezra's Devotion*

As a result of Ezra's reading of the law and his earnestness and faithfulness in appealing to the people, there came about a reformation and a dedication to the service of God, which changed the lives and practices of all those who had been restored to the homeland. The record tells us, "Because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it." Neh. 9:38. Then follows a list of those who set their seal to this significant document. (Neh. 10:1-27.) In verses 28-31 Nehemiah states the solemn covenant into which the people themselves entered. The fathers, "their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding" promised to "walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and His judgments and His statutes." They promised not to intermarry with the people of the land, the heathen, or to permit their sons and daughters to do so. They promised to keep the Sabbath faithfully and to do no business on God's holy day among themselves or with their neighbors. They pledged themselves to the service of the house of God, and arranged for a priesthood of the sons of Aaron who should receive tithes and see that the money was

used according to the law. And Israel consecrated themselves unreservedly to God.

"Provision was also made to support the public worship of God. In addition to the tithe, the congregation pledged themselves to contribute yearly a stated sum for the service of the sanctuary. . . .

"Israel had returned to God with deep sorrow for backsliding. They had made confession with mourning and lamentation. They had acknowledged the righteousness of God's dealings with them, and had covenanted to obey His law. Now they must manifest faith in His promises. God had accepted their repentance; they were now to rejoice in the assurance of sins forgiven and their restoration to divine favor. . . .

"As long as the people were true to the oath they had taken, as long as they were obedient to God's word, so long would the Lord fulfill His promise by pouring rich blessings upon them."—*Ibid.*, pp. 667, 668. (It would be profitable to read both pages entire.)

### *The Dividing Wall of Prejudice*

The very earnestness with which Israel entered upon this reconsecration of heart and life to the service of Jehovah led, through a misconception of their relationship to God and to the world about them, to the making of rules and regulations by their religious leaders in later years. These rules, by the very intricacy of their requirements, sought to make impossible any contacts with those who were not recognized as of Israel, and to set themselves apart as a people superior to all others merely because they were born Hebrews, and, as such, were of necessity God's elect. All others became outcasts without hope and without God. They, the Hebrews, were God's only people. They were the superior and honored race. All others were excluded from God's household and could not be His sons and daughters. So closely bound were they by these traditions that even the slightest kindness to others not of their race was regarded as contrary to correct relationships. This situation became so acute that distinct classes



were established within the nation, and barriers were set up that had no relationship to God's plan for the exaltation of Israel.

By the time Christ came into the world the nation of Israel thought more of external things than of spiritual, of ceremonials than of heart searching, of the letter than of the spirit, of tithing "mint and anise and cummin" than of the "weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." Matt. 23:23. Christ said of these leaders in Israel, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." Matt. 23:25-28. Israel had again come, as she had in other days, to where as a people she was ready to reject the counsels of God, to refuse to acknowledge and finally to put to death the Son, who had been sent into the vineyard to take an accounting of the stewards left in charge.

The pride of religious leadership assumed by the men at the head of the nation had led them into hypocrisy and iniquity. Men who held the highest places in the nation, the highest positions in religious leadership, excused in themselves such selfishness and uncleanness as to provoke the scathing rebuke of Christ. He had called them to the leadership of His people, but they had fallen from their high estate. They too had filled up the cup of their iniquity. These leaders were blind leaders of the blind. Having ears, they heard not when the voice of God spoke to their hearts. Having eyes, they saw not the wondrous working of His grace.

It was into such a situation that Christ, the Messiah for whom they had been looking, came. There can be but little surprise that they were not ready to receive Him as the Son of God, the Messiah of prophecy. Their self-confidence and assurance of racial and



religious superiority unfitted them to see in Jesus the one for whom they professed to be looking. Their ideas of what the Messiah would be like, the relationship He would sustain to the national life, and their conception of His mission as a deliverer from the Romans blinded them to reality, and made it impossible for them to conceive of Jesus as the promised one. True, the common people heard Him gladly, but the majority of these were so steeped in the traditions of the fathers, and so controlled by the national leaders, that they lacked the courage to make decisions for themselves, or to stand firmly for one whom they loved for His nobility of character, His miracles of mercy, His exalted but simple teachings, His homely and forceful illustrations of truth in His parables, and His sinless life.

The attitude of the Jews toward those not of their race or faith is well illustrated by Christ's experience at the well of Samaria (John 4:5-27), by the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), and by the experience of Peter and the centurion (Acts 10:19-35).

"The Jews and the Samaritans were bitter enemies, and as far as possible avoided all dealing with each other. To trade with the Samaritans in case of necessity was indeed counted lawful by the rabbis; but all social intercourse with them was condemned. A Jew would not borrow from a Samaritan, nor receive a kindness, not even a morsel of bread or a cup of water. The disciples, in buying food, were acting in harmony with the custom of their nation. But beyond this they did not go. To ask a favor of the Samaritans, or in any way seek to benefit them, did not enter into the thought of even Christ's disciples."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 183.

The life and example of the Saviour, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the awakening of the apostles and all the membership of the early church—all were needed to begin the work that spread like a living flame to the whole world. It took persecution by enemies to scatter the apostles and to enflame their zeal to give the gospel of Jesus to those not previously considered worthy of a place in the fold of God. It required the

open intervention of Christ on the road to Damascus to stop Saul the persecutor, and make of him Paul the apostle to the Gentiles and the leader in carrying the gospel of Jesus to the heathen world.

A new day had dawned in Israel, a new nation had been born, not of the flesh, but of the spirit. For many decades a purified, enlightened, unselfish, zealous army of men and women, who had found in Jesus the Messiah a personal Saviour, found also in Him the inspiration to carry out God's original intention of making His earthly children witnesses of the love that He held for all mankind. They bore witness to God's desire to save men from sin and destruction, and to give men an entrance into His kingdom as part of the divine family. As long as they remained true to Him, Christian living and teaching remained a powerful force in the world, and His work moved triumphantly forward. His stewards cast in their spiritual lot with Christ and with one another. They were Christ's representatives, brethren and sisters of one family. He who had given all led them to the giving of their all—time, talents, strength, financial resources—to the salvation of mankind.

In the centuries that have followed, the same spirit of service and sacrifice has been evident. Sometimes it has been in almost complete eclipse, but a faithful few even in those dark days held firmly to the calling of the Lord, seeking ever to carry out His will. The days just ahead indicate that God's plan is approaching its climactic fulfillment. Unto every nation and kindred and tongue and people, into every continent and every island of the seven seas, God's witnesses have gone, and are going, in self-sacrificing service. With the gifts of God multiplied to us in this day of opportunity and with hearts wholly dedicated to His service, as humble laborers in His vineyard, we may expect to see rapid progress in spreading the message of the love of God and His power to save. Then Israel will behold the fulfillment of His promise of a new and better world wherein shall dwell the righteous.

"No person is excused from service for Christ because he does not possess the gifts or aptitudes which some one else has. Our gracious Lord is not asking for talents we do not possess, but He is calling for the faithful stewardship of every talent we have."—CHARLES A. COOK, *The Larger Stewardship*, p. 26.

"The heart of stewardship is partnership with the Divine."  
—L. E. FROMM, *Stewardship in Its Larger Aspects*, p. 6.

"Christian stewardship is partnership! We are laborers together with God! What a privilege, what an inspiration, what a responsibility!"—ROBERT WILLIAMSON and HELEN WALLACE, *Stewardship in the Life of Youth*, p. 28.

"Men of God must be diligent in study, earnest in the acquirement of knowledge, never wasting an hour. Through persevering exertion they may rise to almost any degree of eminence as Christians, as men of power and influence. But many will never attain superior rank in the pulpit or in business, because of their unfixedness of purpose, and the laxness of the habits contracted in their youth. Careless inattention is seen in everything they undertake."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 278.

"The development of all our powers is the first duty we owe to God and to our fellow-men. No one who is not growing daily in capability and usefulness is fulfilling the purpose of life. In making a profession of faith in Christ we pledge ourselves to become all that it is possible for us to be as workers for the Master, and we should cultivate every faculty to the highest degree of perfection, that we may do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable."  
—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 329, 330.

# The Stewardship of Time and Other Talents

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"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Ps. 90:12.

WISE men of every age have spoken eloquently of the importance of economizing on time, of utilizing every moment for something profitable—something that will make better men of us. Said Benjamin Franklin, "Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that's the stuff that life is made of." The very love of life should make men careful of the use of time, for when one indulges himself in squandering the minutes or hours of his life, his very idleness eats into his being, destroys his ambition, and corrodes his soul. William Gladstone, the great English statesman, once said, "Believe me when I tell you that thrift of time will repay you in afterlife, with a usury of profit beyond your most sanguine dreams, and that waste of it will make you dwindle alike in intellectual and moral stature, beyond your darkest reckoning."

Franklin is said to have once taught an acquaintance a valuable lesson on the waste of time. The man came into Franklin's store at the front of his newspaper establishment. For an hour or more he dawdled about the store finally going to the clerk and asking the price of a certain book. "One dollar," replied the clerk.

"One dollar!" echoed the man. "Can't you take less than that?"

"One dollar is the price," was the reply.

The man asked for Mr. Franklin, who was working in the pressroom, but was told that he was very busy. "Well, I want to see him," the caller persisted. Mr. Franklin was called, and the would-be purchaser asked him what was the least he would take for the book. "One dollar and a quarter," replied Mr. Franklin.

"But your clerk asked me only a dollar just now."

"True," replied Mr. Franklin, "and I could have better afforded to take a dollar than to leave my work."

Again the purchaser spoke, "Come, tell me your lowest price."

"A dollar and a half," replied Mr. Franklin.

"A dollar and a half! Why, you offered it yourself for a dollar and a quarter."

"Yes," replied Mr. Franklin, "and I could better have taken that price then than a dollar and half now."

The story tells us that the man laid his dollar and a half on the counter, and left the store, taking his book with him, as well as an excellent lesson on turning time into wealth and wisdom. The proper understanding of the value of time is essential not only to the obtaining of wisdom and wealth but to living a life that is pleasing to God and a blessing to one's fellow men. The man who is careless in the use of the time entrusted to him by his Creator is very liable to be a waster of his substance in other ways. This is the reason for the psalmist's prayer as quoted at the head of this chapter, a prayer that he should so plan his days that he might apply his heart unto wisdom. In the same psalm he continues his prayer: "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it." Verse 17. The person who is careless in meeting his appointments, who habitually fritters away the hours with no definite objective, is not the one whose work is established, whether that work be in the ordinary vocations of life or in the direct, definite service of Christ in behalf of others.

One has truly said that "lost wealth may be regained by industry and economy, lost knowledge by study, lost health by

temperance, but lost time is gone forever." Opportunities lost because of indolence or pleasure seeking—opportunities to serve others or to prepare for wider fields of usefulness—are rarely recovered. Nor can one's plea of being too busy to do this or that excuse him from doing the things that God would have him accomplish. "Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 342.

An hour each day withdrawn from the pursuit of pleasure or personal enjoyment, or taken from the time lost in gossip or idleness, profitably employed in study would enable one to prepare in language study or technical knowledge for some place in the cause of God at home or abroad. In a half-hour train journey a young man in less than three months read through D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation*. By spending one hour a day in study, in ten years one could become a well-informed person. It is not time free from labor that men so much need as time that is wisely used.

Burke says of one person what can be said of all too many: "He has nothing to prevent him but too much idleness, which I have observed fills up a man's time much more completely and leaves him less his master, than any sort of employment whatsoever."

Fenelon says concerning God's gift of time, "God . . . never gives us two moments together, nor grants us a second till He has withdrawn the first." Once a moment is gone it is gone forever. What one should do now must be done *now* if it is to be done when and as God would have it done.

In the ninety-first psalm we are told, "With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him My salvation." Verse 16. This is a promise to those who love God. Man's chief satisfaction comes from a life well spent in the service of God and in the knowledge that during the span of his life he has been loyal to principle, has been an inspiration and help to others, has been faithful in the performance of every duty, and has gained the approval of

his heavenly Father and Creator. Says the psalmist in Psalms 21:4, "He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever." Beyond all earthly gifts of life and length of days is the hope of eternal life, promised to all who are faithful. We ask for life today, and God gives it. But that does not consummate His love for His children; the gift of God is "eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23.

As an evidence of our regard for God, His requirements, and His gift of time for a life of service, we must bear in mind certain specific stipulations. The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is that portion of each week during man's allotted span which God requires every one of His sons and daughters to observe. Not only is it of physical benefit to man for him to rest from labor each week, but the Sabbath, a memorial of God's creative work and power, was blessed, sanctified, and set apart by God Himself, for "in it He . . . rested from all His work which God created and made." Gen. 2:3.

When man observes the Sabbath he is recognizing God's claim upon his life, his time, his strength. The Sabbath was intended as a test of man's loyalty to the God who made him, just as much as the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a test of the loyalty of Adam and Eve. God has given us all things to enjoy; His gifts are for our good; but to enjoy these gifts now and in the eternal years, we must show evidence of our loyalty by keeping the day God set apart for a holy use. This requirement was made not only of those who are recognized as the servants of God but of all mankind. "The sabbath was made for man," made to be a blessing to him. In it he should rest from labor. In keeping the Sabbath holy man would be recognizing his relationship to his Creator. "Verily My sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." Ex. 31:13.

God required the individual not only to observe the day but to instruct and to require that every one of his household should observe it. In this the commandment to ancient Israel is plain

and uncompromising. It says, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." Ex. 20:8-10. Introduced by the word *remember*, this commandment is the center of God's law. By remembering to keep God's holy day in recognition of God's creative power, man would be blessed both in this world and in the world to come. In Isaiah 58:13, 14 the promise is made, "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." In Revelation 22:14 we read, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." In this life we are promised delight in the Lord and prosperity and blessing from Him. In the life to come we are promised the privilege lost by our first parents: to eat of the tree of life and to have all the joys of Eden restored, together with an abundant entrance into the New Jerusalem, that city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. In the glorious metropolis of the new earth, with its streets of gold and its gates of pearl, the redeemed shall dwell in the mansions prepared for them by their Redeemer. (John 14:1-3.) The fulfillment of these promises is based wholly in the ultimate analysis upon our acknowledgment of God's ownership of our time.

### *Christians Are Always Diligent*

No true child of God is ever indolent or lazy. When a man is called of God to be a disciple he is galvanized into action. A feeling of responsibility to God in behalf of his fellow men at



once takes possession of him. Paul briefly expresses the thought: "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." Rom. 12:11. All three terms belong together. No one can serve the Lord and be slothful. Service and slothfulness simply will not mix. The Lord is ever working in behalf of the inhabitants of His universe. He neither slumbers nor sleeps. And he who serves the Lord will be "fervent in spirit," in the very nature of his relationship to God.

"Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. . . . The value of time is beyond computation. Christ regarded every moment as precious, and it is thus that we should regard it. Life is too short to be trifled away. We have but a few days of probation in which to prepare for eternity. We have no time to waste, no time to devote to selfish pleasure, no time for the indulgence of sin. It is now that we are to form characters for the future, immortal life. It is now that we are to prepare for the searching Judgment. . . .

"Every moment is freighted with eternal consequences. We are to stand as minute men, ready for service at a moment's notice. The opportunity that is now ours to speak to some needy soul the word of life may never offer again. . . . Life is too solemn to be absorbed in temporal and earthly matters, in a treadmill of care and anxiety for the things that are but an atom in comparison with the things of eternal interest. Yet God has called us to serve Him in the temporal affairs of life. Diligence in this work is as much a part of true religion as is devotion."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 342, 343.

It is important, therefore, that every child of God should maintain a proper balance between his temporal duties and his spiritual responsibility toward the lost.

There are those things about God's service that leave us room for choice. There are lines of service which we should choose in preference to others, depending upon the time and the nature of the service called for. This is beautifully illustrated in the experience of Christ at the home of Mary and Martha in Bethany.

Martha was ever a diligent soul, doing with faithfulness those duties that are always the portion of every good housekeeper. She was an earnest, loyal soul—nothing slipshod or careless about her. Her sister Mary was more of an idealist, a dreamer. Christ came one day to visit in this home. Martha went about her household tasks with new inspiration, gladly making preparations for the entertainment of One whom they had all come to love. He was their guest, and as such she would make thorough work of her entertainment. But Mary, in her eagerness to learn more of their Friend's teaching, went in to sit at the Master's feet and be taught of Him.

Martha, hard-working woman that she was, was troubled that Mary did not come to her assistance in preparing for the entertainment of their Guest. She was, so the record tells us, "cumbered about much serving." She complained to Jesus of Mary's leaving her to serve alone. Christ did not resent Martha's complaint or chide her for her devotion to duty. But He did seek to draw a lesson. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Luke 10:41, 42. When it comes to a choice of whether we shall perform the routine duties of daily life or sit at the feet of the Master, we should know the time and the place, and choose wisely as to where duty lies.

Whatever the work in which we engage, the Word of God teaches us to be "not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," "knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." Rom. 12:11; Eccl. 9:10; Col. 3:24.

All Israel of old, in the days of the Saviour, were too much engrossed in the cares of life, the household routine, the affairs of business, the service of the Temple, to see the importance of sitting down and quietly seeking to know the will of God, to let Him speak to their souls. There is a time for arduous labor, and there is a time for quiet meditation and seeking after God.

We need to know His will and better equip ourselves for God's service. Christ must have had these things in mind when He spoke to Martha.

Later in the Saviour's experience and service He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, acclaimed by the multitude as He traveled the rocky road into the holy city. On the road overlooking Jerusalem He halted and beholding the city, wept over it, exclaiming, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." Luke 19:42. The inhabitants of that city too had been cumbered with much serving until all but the service had been forgotten, and the weightier matters—"judgment, mercy, and faith"—had been lost in a round of ceremonies.

There is a middle path which every servant of God should choose. But sometimes we excuse ourselves as being too busy to attend to some of the spiritual duties to which the Master calls. We are too busy in making a living to take on responsibilities in the church or in behalf of the lost, too busy to sit down and talk with God and study His Word and ways. But there is a better way.

A man who loved God worked at his trade from ten to twelve hours a day. There was a family, a wife and four little ones, to provide for, and the hours outside the factory were filled with home duties and other responsibilities. The local church had chosen him year after year as elder, and this too demanded time and earnest study. There were the Sabbath services, to which much study and preparation must be given, the prayer meetings, and the business meetings of the church. Those were days when ministers were few, and they rarely came to minister to already-established churches. These were left to the care of the local elders. Yet day by day as he labored at the machine on which he produced goods for his employer there was propped up in full view an open Bible. At a glance, a sentence here or a phrase there was memorized; and his preparation for his spiritual responsibilities was continued through the week. Need it be said that this diligence in spiritual things while not neglecting the

temporal (he was the best and most conscientious workman in the factory) was but the school for a call to broader service; and at last God honored him by giving him a call to the ministry, to which he devoted the rest of his active life, and that with outstanding success. There is a fine balance between the temporal and the spiritual relations of the children of God, and the spiritual cannot be neglected for the temporal without eternal loss. Nor can we afford to put off our decision as to where we personally shall stand in this important matter.

Says the apostle Paul in writing to the Ephesians, "See then that ye walk circumspectly . . . as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." Eph. 5:15-17. If these words of admonition were timely in Paul's day, how much more do they apply to us today. We near the close of time. The end of all things is at hand. It behooves us to say with Christ, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." John 9:4. Paul also in writing to the Colossians says, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, buying up the opportunity." Col. 4:5, R.V., margin. There are so many lost and straying; so much is yet to be accomplished to bring Christ's saving grace home to their hearts, that we need to be constantly studying how we can improve our time and use our talents to the glory of God and for the more rapid growth of His kingdom.

"The only way in which we can redeem our time is by making the most of that which remains, by being co-workers with God in His great plan of redemption. In him who does this, a transformation of character takes place. He becomes a son of God, a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. He is fitted to be the companion of the angels.

"Now is our time to labor for the salvation of our fellow-men. There are some who think that if they give money to the cause of Christ, this is all they are required to do; the precious time in which they might do personal service for Him passes unimproved. But it is the privilege and duty of all who

have health and strength to render to God active service. All are to labor in winning souls to Christ. Donations of money cannot take the place of this."—*Ibid.*, pp. 342, 343.

*Talents Given to Every Man*

"The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey." Matt. 25:14, 15.

This parable indicates that God-given talents are the heritage of all human beings. Some have been blessed with more, others with less, but on everyone the gifts of God have been bestowed.

All men have been bought with an infinite price. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all the treasure of the universe, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, and the soul of every human being. Whether believers or unbelievers, all men are the Lord's property. All are called to do service for Him, and for the manner in which they have met this claim all will be required to render an account in the great judgment day.

"But the claims of God are not recognized by all. It is those who profess to have accepted Christ's service, who in the parable are represented as His own servants. Christ's followers have been redeemed for service. Our Lord teaches that the true object of life is ministry. Christ Himself was a worker, and to all His followers He gives the law of service,—a service to God and to their fellow-men. Here Christ has presented to the world a higher conception of life than they had ever known. By living to minister for others, man is brought into connection with Christ. The law of service becomes the connecting link which binds us to God and to our fellow-men. . . .

"The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit. . . . All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised. . . .

"Learning, talents, eloquence, every natural or acquired endowment, may be possessed; but without the presence of the Spirit of God, no heart will be touched, no sinner be won to Christ. . . .

"The special gifts of the Spirit are not the only talents represented in the parable. It includes all gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual. All are to be employed in Christ's service. In becoming His disciples, we surrender ourselves to Him with all that we are and have. These gifts He returns to us purified and ennobled, to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow-men. . . .

"The talents are not apportioned capriciously. He who has ability to use five talents receives five. He who can improve but two, receives two. He who can wisely use only one, receives one. None need lament that they have not received larger gifts; for He who has apportioned to every man, is equally honored by the improvement of each trust, whether it be great or small."—*Ibid.*, pp. 326-328.

The manner in which the three classes of individuals in the parable made use of the Lord's gifts is of interest and significance. The two who had been given five and two talents respectively, each made such use of the talents that they were doubled. They recognized their responsibility and the generosity of the master whom they served, and they acted accordingly. We can bring nothing to God that is not already His. "All things come of Thee," said King David, "and of Thine own have we given Thee." 1 Chron. 29:14.

"All things are God's, not only by creation, but by redemption. All the blessings of this life and of the life to come, are delivered to us stamped with the cross of Calvary. Therefore the charge that God is a hard master, reaping where He has not sown, is false. . . . Our heavenly Father requires no more nor less than He has given us ability to do. He lays upon His servants no burdens that they are not able to bear. . . . All that He claims from us we through divine grace can render."—*Ibid.*, p. 362.

But the servant to whom only one talent was given excused

himself on the basis that his lord was a hard man, reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not strawed. He claimed that he was afraid, so he hid his lord's money in the earth, and returned to him the original gift, not even having placed it at interest. The Lord called him slothful and wicked, and reminded him that he might at least have put it out at interest with the exchangers. How many there are today who pursue this same course with their spiritual resources, which are God's gift to them for use in helping others!

"We shall individually be held responsible for doing one jot less than we have ability to do. The Lord measures with exactness every possibility for service. The unused capabilities are as much brought into account as are those that are improved. For all that we might become through the right use of our talents, God holds us responsible. We shall be judged according to what we ought to have done, but did not accomplish because we did not use our powers to glorify God."—*Ibid.*, p. 363.

How many members of the church of Christ, professing to be His brethren and sisters, partakers of His spiritual and material bounties, do but little or nothing to improve their talents and multiply their ability to serve in the cause of Christ! In every church there are numbers who come week by week to receive, but do not go forth from the service to give of the bread of life. Many stagnate and die spiritually, and eventually come to the place where when asked to give an account for their abilities which they have failed to use, accuse their Lord of being a hard master. Often they also accuse their fellow servants of injustice in seeking to arouse them to do the things they are capable of doing.

A certain church member attending a convention came to the leader who was present from headquarters, and put to him this question: "Do you not think it is wrong for a church nominating committee to ask you to do something for which you have no special preparation?"

The rejoinder was, "What did they ask you to do?"

"Act as church treasurer," was the reply.

"What have you been doing?"

"I've been the Sabbath school superintendent," she replied.

"Were you the choice of the committee and of the church for the treasurer's work? Can you read and write? Are you good at figures?" were the questions asked.

To all of which the reply came, "Yes, and I can do fairly well at figures."

Then the response of the visiting worker was, "The church must trust you and believe in your ability to do the work to which they have called you. Moreover, when we are called to serve God in any capacity He has promised that as we, in faith, step out to do His will He will enable us to do far more than we in our fearfulness think we are able to accomplish. Go back, sister, and do your best, and He will add to your present talents as He sees your willingness to serve."

All too few will accept responsibilities that might, under God's blessing, well become the steppingstones to wider and more efficient service in the cause of God.

In our relationship to God in the use of our talents there is one rule that the Saviour Himself laid down when He answered the question of the scribe who asked, "What is the first commandment of all?" The answer included these all-comprehensive words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." Mark 12:30. He who loves God and His Son to such an extent will never show any hesitancy in accepting God's call upon his time, his talents, and his strength. He will desire to glorify God by giving himself wholly to God's service. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6:20.

### *The Rewards of the Faithful Use of Talents*

The closing portion of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, dealing with the use of our talents, pictures the hour of judgment when all nations shall be called before the King, who has just come in His glory. He has separated those who have loved and

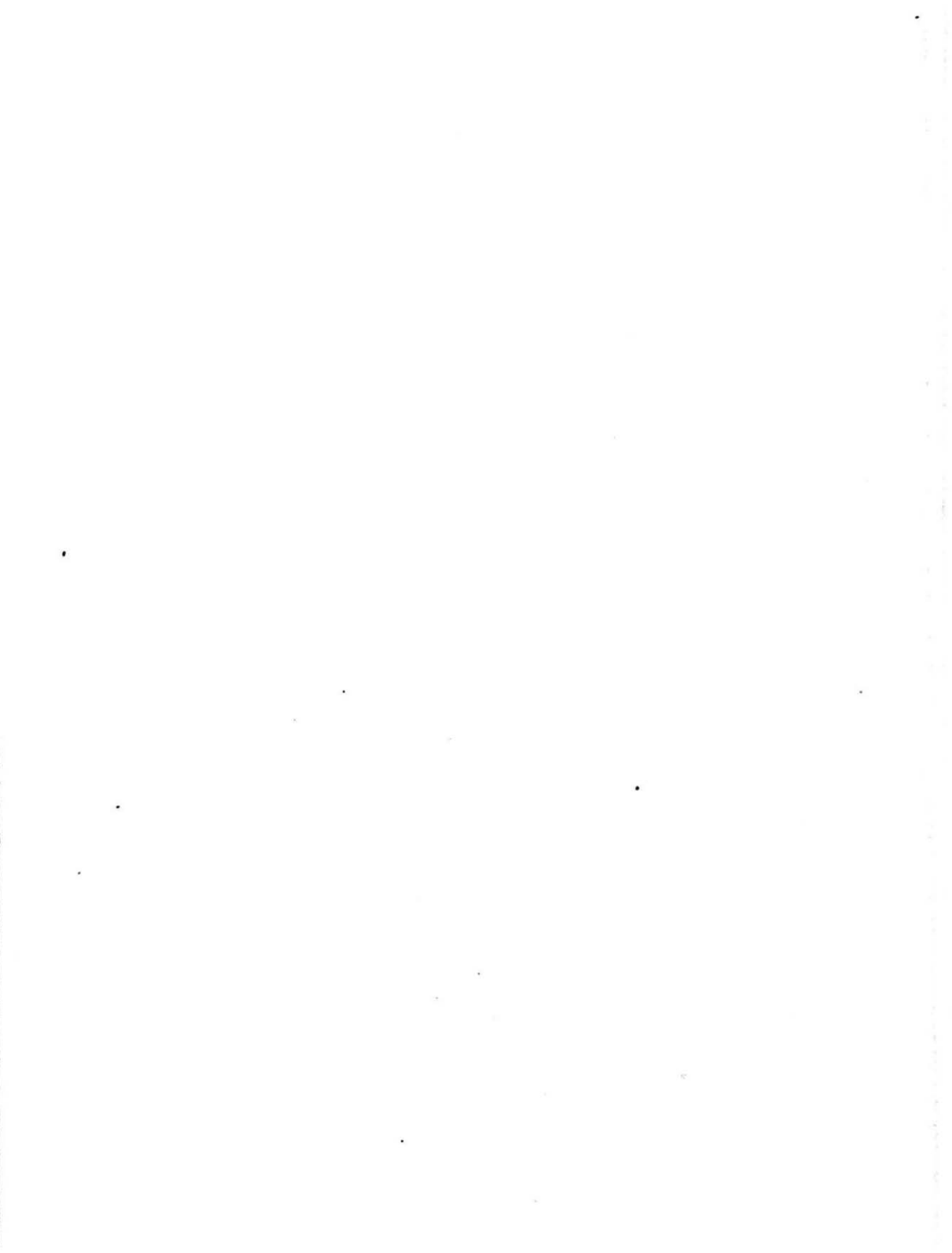


served Him, the sheep of His pasture, and set them on His right hand. He commends them for their lives of service, for their unselfish ministry to those who were in need. Out of the love that they possessed for their Lord they had served their fellow men, physically and spiritually ministering to them and pointing the way by that service to the Lord and Master. To them it was not something great that they had done, just the outpouring of the love that filled their own hearts. But their Lord commends, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matt. 25:40. What a loss is sustained by one who fails to pour out his life in service to others! In one statement we read:

"His [Christ's] followers are not to feel themselves detached from the perishing world around them. They are a part of the great web of humanity; and Heaven looks upon them as brothers to sinners as well as to saints. The fallen, the erring, and the sinful, Christ's love embraces; and every deed of kindness done to uplift a fallen soul, every act of mercy, is accepted as done to Him."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 638.

"He who becomes a child of God should henceforth look upon Himself as a link in the chain let down to save the world, one with Christ in His plan of mercy, going forth with Him to seek and save the lost. . . . We shall find His footprints beside the sick-bed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great cities, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation."—*Ministry of Healing*, pp. 105, 106.

What are the talents God has given you? How are you using them? Are you truly a steward of Him who gave His all for humanity, and who bestowed upon you all that you possess? Be these talents that you possess many or few, be your power to do great or small, your talents will be increased when put to use for your Lord; and their increase will be a source of increased strength, of broader vision, and of deeper contentment. Remember! Your time as well as your talents, inherited or acquired in service, is the gift of your Lord. Let us glorify Him in our bodies and in our spirits, for these are His.



"The misuse of our physical powers shortens the period of time in which our lives can be used for the glory of God. And it unfits us to accomplish the work God has given us to do. By allowing ourselves to form wrong habits, by keeping late hours, by gratifying appetite at the expense of health, we lay the foundation for feebleness. By neglecting physical exercise, by overworking mind or body, we unbalance the nervous system. Those who thus shorten their lives and unfit themselves for service by disregarding nature's laws, are guilty of robbery toward God. And they are robbing their fellow-men also. The opportunity of blessing others, the very work for which God sent them into the world, has by their own course of action been cut short. And they have unfitted themselves to do even that which in a briefer period of time they might have accomplished. The Lord holds us guilty when by our injurious habits we thus deprive the world of good."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 346, 347.

# The Stewardship of Physical Health

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THROUGH the agencies of nature, God is working day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, to keep us alive, to build up and restore us. When any part of the body sustains injury, a healing process is at once begun; nature's agencies are set at work to restore soundness. But the power working through these agencies is the power of God. All life-giving power is from Him. When one recovers from disease, it is God who restores him."—*Ministry of Healing*, pp. 112, 113.

If an injury breaks the skin and bleeding takes place, the God who created man and who sustains his life has made provision for the work of healing and restoration to begin immediately. The blood coagulates, stanches the flow from the broken capillaries, and almost at once what we commonly call a scab begins to cover the spot; and beneath this the work of healing continues until a normal condition returns.

If some infection occurs, the body sets its healing forces into action to counteract and destroy the enemy within. Medicine's chief work is to aid these bodily functions in fulfilling their natural duties in the restoration of a healthy condition. But it is because of the Creator's wise provision for man's need that the healing process is possible. The closer the human physician can cooperate with nature and nature's remedies, the more satisfactory and permanent will be the healing process.

From the earliest days of man's existence God has sought the bodily as well as the spiritual health of the individual. "Sickness, suffering, and death are the work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer."—*Ibid.*, p. 113. Says the Scripture, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." Ex. 15:26. Only with the inception of sin in the human family did disease and suffering enter. Its beginning in the experience of Adam and Eve was the warning of eventual death. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The sentence of death was passed upon them; and sickness, suffering, and disease were the sure signs of eventual disintegration.

Yet this was not God's wish. God's desire for the human race is beautifully expressed in the words of 3 John 2: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." It is equally important in the sight of God that man should be in health of body as well as of soul. Suffering may drive men to think upon God, to ponder whether their suffering may not be the result of transgression. But God does not wish man to suffer. Above all things He desires man's health, total and complete—physical, mental, and spiritual.

God promised ancient Israel, "Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and He shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee." Ex. 23:25. And again He says, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee." Ex. 15:26. How precious should be this promise given to Israel, and confirmed in what is said of Jesus our Saviour: "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Matt. 8:17.

### *Provision Made for Israel's Health*

God did not leave ancient Israel, nor has He left us, without definite instruction concerning how to live in order to preserve as great a degree of health as possible in a sin-sick world. Israel

was given a code of sanitation and hygiene that has been a model for succeeding generations. Many of our health regulations of today find their basis in what are known as the Mosaic laws, and the race would be the better healthwise if they were more closely followed. In Leviticus, chapters 11 to 15, and 17, many of these regulations are recorded. Among them were those indicating which animals were safe to eat for food and which should not be eaten by the children of God. It is an established fact that more than eighteen million people in these United States, to make no mention of the peoples of other lands where the same habits obtain, are suffering from trichinosis, a disease directly traceable to the eating of the flesh of animals forbidden in the code given to Israel by the Lord. And trichinosis is responsible for many other serious ailments suffered by those who indulge the appetite in direct transgression of God's explicit instruction.

Of this provision for ancient Israel we read:

"Not only in their religious service, but in all the affairs of daily life was observed the distinction between clean and unclean. All who came in contact with contagious or contaminating diseases were isolated from the encampment, and they were not permitted to return without thorough cleansing of both the person and the clothing. . . .

"The necessity of personal cleanliness was taught in the most impressive manner. Before gathering at Mount Sinai to listen to the proclamation of the law by the voice of God, the people were required to wash both their persons and their clothing. This direction was enforced on pain of death. No impurity was to be tolerated in the presence of God.

"During the sojourn in the wilderness, the Israelites were almost continually in the open air, where impurities would have a less harmful effect than upon the dwellers in close houses. But the strictest regard to cleanliness was required both within and without their tents.

"Many articles of food eaten freely by the heathen about them were forbidden to the Israelites. It was no arbitrary distinction that was made. The things prohibited were unwholesome.

And the fact that they were pronounced unclean taught the lesson that the use of injurious foods is defiling. That which corrupts the body tends to corrupt the soul. It unfits the user for communion with God, unfits him for high and holy service."—*Ibid.*, pp. 277-280.

*The Results of Obedience to God's Laws of Health*

"God gave to Israel instruction in all the principles essential to physical as well as to moral health, and it was concerning these principles no less than concerning those of the moral law that He commanded them:

"These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.' Deut. 6:6-9.

"And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, . . . The Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.' Verses 20, 21, 24.

"Had the Israelites obeyed the instruction they received, and profited by their advantages, they would have been the world's object-lesson of health and prosperity. If as a people they had lived according to God's plan, they would have been preserved from the diseases that afflicted other nations. Above any other people they would have possessed physical strength, and vigor of intellect. They would have been the mightiest nation on the earth."—*Ibid.*, p. 283.

The very words of the benediction that Aaron and his sons were instructed to give as a blessing to Israel indicate the plan of the Lord for His people.

"Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee:  
Jehovah make His face to shine upon thee,  
And be gracious unto thee:  
Jehovah lift up His countenance upon thee,  
And give thee peace.  
So shall they put My name upon the children of Israel;  
And I will bless them."—Num. 6:24-27, A.R.V.

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be.  
There is none like unto God, O Jeshurun,  
Who rideth upon the heavens for thy help,  
And in His excellency on the skies.  
The eternal God is thy dwelling place,  
And underneath are the everlasting arms: . . .  
Israel dwelleth in safety,  
The fountain of Jacob alone,  
In a land of corn and wine;  
Yea, His heavens drop down dew.  
Happy art thou, O Israel:  
Who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord,  
The shield of thy help,  
And that is the sword of thy excellency!"

—Deut. 33:25-29, R.V.

"The Israelites failed of fulfilling God's purpose, and thus failed of receiving the blessings that might have been theirs. But in Joseph and Daniel, in Moses and Elisha, and many others, we have noble examples of the results of the true plan of living. Like faithfulness to-day will produce like results. To us it is written:

"'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.' 1 Peter 2:9."—*Ibid.*, pp. 285, 286.

During Israel's wandering in the wilderness for a period of forty years en route to the Promised Land, God fulfilled His



promise to keep them in health, not only preserving their strength for their arduous journey, but miraculously maintaining their lives and even their garments. Under inspiration the psalmist writes, "There was not a feeble person among their tribes" (Ps. 105:37), and sickness and death came only as the result of complaining and rebellion against the One who led them. It is the same writer of Holy Writ who says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Ps. 103:2, 3.

That this is God's plan and desire for His children is evidenced by the time Jesus spent during His earthly sojourn in ministering to the physical needs of the people. Early in His ministry it was said of Him, "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Matt. 4:23. The fame of the Great Physician spread throughout all Syria, and the people brought their sick for whom healing had not been found, those possessed of devils, the people with disordered minds, and paralytics; and the record says, "He healed them." Verse 24. There is no record in all the gospel narrative in which Jesus refused the plea of one who suffered, whether Jew, Samaritan, or Gentile. When He brought healing to the ten lepers only one appreciated the gift, and he was a stranger and a Samaritan. For the sake of that one Christ healed the ten. The great heart of love, which has borne and still bears with recreant humanity, feels sympathy and pity for them in their necessities, and His power is still exercised in their behalf.

### *We Are God's Dwelling Place*

Because of His mercy and love we must not presume upon God's bounties. God is willing to give us abundantly above all that we ask or think. But a continuance of His blessings is dependent upon our attitude, our willingness to cooperate with Him. We are not our own; we have been "bought with a price." Asks the apostle Paul, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and

ye are not your own?" 1 Cor. 6:19. And because we are not our own, because we have been bought with a price, even the precious blood of the Son of God, it is our duty, as well as our privilege to glorify God in our body, and in our spirit, which are God's. (Verse 20.)

The consequences of failure on our part to avail ourselves of such knowledge concerning our bodily health and its maintenance are stated clearly, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Cor. 3:17. The natural consequence of the transgression of the laws of health is the gradual disintegration of the normal body functions. The indulgence of appetite, failure to exercise, and carelessness concerning the need for fresh air, rest, and other essentials to health defile the temple of God.

Wrong habits of eating and drinking are prevailing sins of the modern age. The curbing of the appetite, the denial of desire, is rare. All too many parents, who have been given light on the principles of healthful living, indulge a perverted appetite and permit its constant indulgence on the part of their children.

### *A Scripture Illustration*

A similar condition existed in the days of ancient Israel when, by their indifference to the instruction given of God, by their evil course in life, and by their failure to instruct and control their children, they were paving the way for future suffering and captivity in Babylon. Yet there were some in Israel who remained true to God's commands, true to the laws of health promulgated by God's servant Moses. When, with the nation's leaders, Daniel was taken into captivity, he purposed in his heart not to defile himself "with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." Dan. 1:8. The story of that experience, the test made for ten days by the prince of the eunuchs, the blessing God gave, the findings of the king that Daniel and his fellows were ten times better in wisdom and understanding than all the magicians and astrologers in the

realm—all these gave practical evidence to the value of the clean living and right habits formed by these youth in their Judean homes. (Verse 20.)

Of this experience of Daniel and his three companions we read:

"Among the children of Israel who were carried captive to Babylon at the beginning of the seventy years' captivity were Christian patriots, men who were as true as steel to principle, who would not be corrupted by selfishness, but who would honor God at the loss of all things. In the land of their captivity these men were to carry out God's purpose by giving to heathen nations the blessings that come through a knowledge of Jehovah. They were to be His representatives. Never were they to compromise with idolaters; their faith and their name as worshipers of the living God they were to bear as a high honor. And this they did. In prosperity and adversity they honored God; and God honored them. . . .

"Among those who maintained their allegiance to God were Daniel and his three companions,—illustrious examples of what men may become who unite with the God of wisdom and power. From the comparative simplicity of their Jewish home, these youth of royal line were taken to the most magnificent of cities, and into the court of the world's greatest monarch. . . .

"Daniel and his associates had been trained by their parents to habits of strict temperance. They had been taught that God would hold them accountable for their capabilities, and that they must never dwarf or enfeeble their powers. This education was to Daniel and his companions the means of their preservation amidst the demoralizing influences of the court of Babylon. Strong were the temptations surrounding them in that corrupt and luxurious court, but they remained uncontaminated. No power, no influence, could sway them from the principles they had learned in early life by a study of the word and works of God."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 479-482.

The subsequent life of Daniel and his fellows, the attempts to corrupt them and to test their devotion and loyalty to God, the

eventual conviction brought home to Nebuchadnezzar of the power and might of the God of heaven, the God of Israel, are matters of historical record. They are worthy of intensive study on the part of all who desire to carry out the purposes of Jehovah.

### *Paul's Counsel and Example*

The apostle recognized the principle that to obtain perfect coordination of the physical functions and to gain success in daily life, one must be temperate in all things. He illustrates his message by reference to a national pastime that was familiar to all Greek people, the foot races. The runners strove for a prize. Only one person could obtain it, but all who strove to obtain the prize lived abstemiously, temperately. They did it to obtain a crown that would fade and decay. But, says the apostle, we are temperate in all things that we may obtain a crown that is incorruptible. Of his own life he says, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." 1 Cor. 9:26, 27.

To preach Christ and the principles of His kingdom demands that we should live the Christ life and follow His teachings. Those laws of health which He has recorded in the Scriptures must be the controlling influence of our lives if we are to exert any influence for good in the lives of the world about us. Every Christian should study to show himself approved unto God, as much in the physical life as in the spiritual realm.

### *True Temperance a Balanced Program*

To be truly temperate is to be neither a faddist nor an extremist. "Temperate in all things" means just that, no more, no less. In diet, in dress, in work, in exercise, in hours of rest, and in peace of mind, to name just a few of life's phases affected by temperate living, there must be no compromise with selfish, personal inclination, but instead, that steady operation of life

principles which will build a strong physical frame, maintain a sound mental development, and lead to spiritual calm and trust. Let us consider briefly some of these temperance and health factors.

### *Eat to God's Glory*

In Ecclesiastes 10:17 the wise man writes, "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!" The diet of the individual Christian has much to do with his character, his behavior, and his practice of his faith. Nor is the food itself the only contributing factor. Not alone what we eat but the time we eat, the way we eat, and the mental attitude with which we eat all contribute to the building up or tearing down of physical strength and the molding of character.

"Those foods should be chosen that best supply the elements needed for building up the body. In this choice, appetite is not a safe guide. Through wrong habits of eating, the appetite has become perverted. Often it demands food that impairs health and causes weakness instead of strength. We can not safely be guided by the customs of society. The disease and suffering that everywhere prevail are largely due to popular errors in regard to diet. . . .

"Not all foods wholesome in themselves are equally suited to our needs under all circumstances. Care should be taken in the selection of food. Our diet should be suited to the season, to the climate in which we live, and to the occupation we follow. Some foods that are adapted for use at one season or in one climate are not suited to another. So there are different foods best suited for persons in different occupations. Often food that can be used with benefit by those engaged in hard physical labor is unsuitable for persons of sedentary pursuits or intense mental application. God has given us an ample variety of healthful foods, and each person should choose from it the things that experience and sound judgment prove to be best suited to his own necessities."—*Ministry of Healing*, pp. 295-297.

Space here forbids the use of more of the excellent material and counsel given concerning this subject in pages 295-324 of *Ministry of Healing*, but it would profit every reader to cover these pages carefully in his research and study.

### *Pure Water a Necessity*

Not less important than good food is good water. It is the only beverage provided by nature without some form of artificial preparation.

"In health and in sickness, pure water is one of heaven's choicest blessings. Its proper use promotes health. It is the beverage which God provided to quench the thirst of animals and man. Drunk freely, it helps to supply the necessities of the system, and assists nature to resist disease. The external application of water is one of the easiest and most satisfactory ways of regulating the circulating of the blood. A cold or cool bath is an excellent tonic. Warm baths open the pores, and thus aid in the elimination of impurities."—*Ibid.*, p. 237.

The importance of water in the preservation of human life, in the cure of disease, and in the cleansing of the human system from poisons and toxins that would otherwise accumulate is not so fully understood as it should be.

Impurities multiply in water supplies where the human race congregate in great numbers. City conditions are a contributing factor to pollution, and have made necessary the provision of water supplies in mountain lakes and reservoirs, rivers and deep wells, all of which, to ensure the absence of harmful bacteria, must be heavily charged with chemical solutions to guarantee a disease-free supply of this essential to human life, health, and happiness.

In many lands the only safe water for drinking purposes is water that has been boiled to destroy the bacteria. Pure water is to be preferred above carbonated drinks, both in healthfulness and in economy to the user. Tea, coffee, and their relatives, cola drinks and similar preparations, should not be imbibed by those who wish to retain the best of health.

*Ventilate and Vitalize*

Pure air is essential to right living. It has long since, for the intelligent person, become a fixed idea that he must have a supply of fresh air night and day. The old-fashioned idea of a century ago that night air was a source of disease has been definitely placed in retirement. People today know better. Mechanical devices are available to provide our homes day and night with warm fresh air in winter, and with cool fresh air in summer. Public buildings are often air conditioned throughout, as are also many private homes. We are air conscious, let us hope, to our lasting benefit.

We are told: "The lungs are constantly throwing off impurities, and they need to be constantly supplied with fresh air. Impure air does not afford the necessary supply of oxygen, and the blood passes to the brain and other organs without being vitalized. Hence the necessity of thorough ventilation."—*Ibid.*, p. 274.

*Come Ye Apart and Rest*

The busy life of an earnest, conscientious Christian is often taxing to the mental as well as the physical being, and demands both a quieter atmosphere and a change of scene as well as of physical rest. In fact, mental relaxation and physical rest are very closely related. Christ recognized this when, on the return of His disciples from a period of arduous labor about the time of the execution of John the Baptist, He said to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." Mark 6:31.

"Christ did not send them away without His Spirit, and by faith in Him they worked many miracles; but they needed now to feed on the bread of life. They needed to go to a place of retirement, where they could hold communion with Jesus, and receive instruction for future work. . . .

"Christ is full of tenderness and compassion for all in His

service. He would show His disciples that God does not require sacrifice, but mercy. They had been putting their whole souls into labor for the people, and this was exhausting their physical and mental strength. It was their duty to rest. . . .

"The rest which Christ and His disciples took was not self-indulgent rest. The time they spent in retirement was not devoted to pleasure-seeking. They talked together regarding the work of God, and the possibility of bringing greater efficiency to the work. The disciples had been with Christ, and could understand Him; to them He need not talk in parables. He corrected their errors, and made plain to them the right way of approaching the people. He opened more fully to them the precious treasures of divine truth. They were vitalized by divine power, and inspired with hope and courage."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 360, 361.

Yet there are certain physical limitations that indicate the necessity of absolute rest. The physical need is more apparent in some individuals than in others. To meet one's own need, a person should know the amount of physical rest and the kind of rest he requires. One person may need from eight to ten hours of restful sleep each day. Another thrives well on four or five hours. One individual finds rest in a change from mental to physical labor; but another, whose work is largely physical, may find rest in mental activity. The hard-working farmer or mechanic or day laborer, who spends too many hours in physical toil, may, however, fall into heavy slumber within a few moments if he endeavors to sit down to read or study. Each individual should study his own rest requirements, and arrange his program, if possible, to provide regular periods of rest. Yet, even then there may be times when one should get away from the daily grind, and find a longer period of rest in a change of scene and occupation, such as a vacation trip.

Rest that is refreshment and restoration of the life forces is absolutely necessary, and cannot be neglected without shortening one's life and service. Hence, every man is the steward of his God-given powers, and is accountable to God for the way in which he uses his rest periods as well as his hours of labor.



*An Abundance of Physical Exercise*

Exercise has come to be associated in most minds with some form of games or sports, such as tennis, football, running, jumping, and mountain climbing. But the broader meaning of the term includes all forms of physical exertion, either for pleasure to take the mind off more taxing pursuits or in productive labor, as in tilling the fields, running a machine in a factory, herding cattle or sheep, or any similar useful work. This is what is referred to by Solomon in Ecclesiastes 5:12, where he says, "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet." Physical exercise, whether taken in profitable labor or more recreational employment of the muscles of the body, induces sound sleep. After a day of mental labor that puts the mind in a whirl, as we express it, a brisk walk in the out-of-doors will usually produce just the change needed in the attitude of mind and body to induce restful sleep. But to the physical laborer who has been employed to his limit during the day, a quiet period of relaxation for reading on some subject not connected with his daily toil may be the most valuable exercise he can take. And here again we are stewards of the grace of God, and we should study to obtain a balanced program of exercise, whether it be work or play, physical or mental. We are accountable to God for the use of our powers for service, and should so plan our lives as to make the most profitable use of the time and strength He has entrusted to us.

*The Ornament of a Meek and Quiet Spirit*

Much has been said and doubtless will be said about the Christian's dress and personal appearance. Perhaps no better definition can here be given than the words of the apostle Peter to wives in the early Christian church. He writes: "While they behold your chaste conversation [conduct] coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which

is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Peter 3:2-4. This is a well-balanced statement of the place of dress and ornament in the life of Christian womanhood. "Our clothing, while modest and simple, should be of good quality, of becoming colors, and suited for service. It should be chosen for durability rather than display. It should provide warmth and proper protection. . . .

"Our dress should be cleanly. Uncleanliness in dress is unhealthful, and thus defiling to the body and to the soul. . . .

"In all respects the dress should be healthful. 'Above all things,' God desires us to 'be in health,'—health of body and of soul. And we are to be workers together with Him for the health of both soul and body. Both are promoted by healthful dress.

"It should have the grace, the beauty, the appropriateness of natural simplicity. Christ has warned us against the pride of life, but not against its grace and natural beauty. . . .

"The most beautiful dress He bids us wear upon the soul. No outward adorning can compare in value and loveliness with that 'meek and quiet spirit' which in His sight is 'of great price.'" —*Ministry of Healing*, pp. 288, 289.

Nor should the brethren point all the advice and counsel to the sisters. There are things about the clothing and ornamentation worn by men that should be eschewed as definitely as that worn by women and girls. A safe pattern to follow would be to wear healthful clothes, of good quality, that will not attract undue attention, or mark us as extreme, but rather as men and women of good taste who command the respect of their brethren and sisters and of the world about us. Let us remember here, as elsewhere in our study of stewardship, that our lives and influence must be positively for Christ and the kingdom of God. Then we can meet the Master with an increase in the talents He has entrusted to us.

### *Had Israel Been True*

Had Israel of old been faithful in their stewardship, their status before God and in the sight of all the nations around them would have been an exalted one. Of their prospects

and possibilities Moses prophesied: "It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently, . . . all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out." Deut. 28:1-6. A blessing was pronounced upon every phase of their lives. It is recognized by all students of nutrition today that the health and strength and the will to live and to accomplish are tied closely to, and dependent upon, adequate supplies of food and a properly balanced diet. God would have made provision for all the needs of His people had they proved faithful to Him.

#### *Whatsoever Ye Do*

A good life is made up of little things well and faithfully done. The Saviour has given us the parable of the rich lord who said to one of his servants, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Matt. 25:21. It may seem one of the little things, the "few things," to guard every avenue of health, so that we may be able to do the most effective service for the Master, but we are told, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10:31.

The call of God in the stewardship of health is to complete consecration. Victory must be gained over every evil appetite or action. We must conquer every desire to transgress the laws of health, even if that transgression may seem small to others. It may have disastrous implications to us in our relationship to that reasonable service which is acceptable to God. We may not of ourselves have the strength to conquer those habits that affect our lives adversely, but we can do all things through Christ which

strengtheneth us. (Phil. 4:13.) If He can give men the power to overcome such evil habits as the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other narcotic drugs, He can give us also victory. We are the stewards of His grace. His gifts He has fully bestowed upon us. In our stewardship of health shall we not dedicate ourselves anew to His service, conquering every evil habit and every weakness of the flesh, overcoming by His grace, that men may see in us the image of Him who is able to "save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him"? Heb. 7:25.

"It is a terrible thing to neglect the education of children. Not only will they be lost in consequence, but the parents themselves, who have so far departed from God as to lose all sense of their sacred responsibility, stand in a very perilous position as regards eternal life."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 204.

"However large, however small, your talents, remember that what you have is yours only in trust. Thus God is testing you, giving you opportunity to prove yourself true. To Him you are indebted for all your capabilities. To Him belong your powers of body, mind, and soul, and for Him these powers are to be used. Your time, your influence, your capabilities, your skill,—all must be accounted for to Him who gives all. He uses his gifts best who seeks by earnest endeavor to carry out the Lord's great plan for the uplifting of humanity, remembering always that he must be a learner as well as a teacher."—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, pp. 281, 282.

"Parents and teachers should aim to so cultivate the tendencies of the youth that at each stage of life they may represent the beauty appropriate to that period, unfolding naturally, as do the plants in a garden."—*Education*, p. 107.

"The influence of the mother who has a close connection with Christ is of infinite worth. Her ministry of love makes the home a Bethel. Christ works with her, turning the common water of life into the wine of heaven. Her children will grow up to be a blessing and an honor to her in this life and in the life to come."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 206.

"Any occupation to which God calls a young person, the place where He wants him and can use him, is a sacred calling and a stewardship."—ROBERT WILLIAMSON and HELEN WALLACE, *Stewardship in the Life of Youth*, p. 86.

# Stewardship in the Home

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IN THE beginning of earth's history God made man to inhabit the earth, which He had created. He said that it was "not good that man should be alone." Said He, "I will make him an help meet for him." So "God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took out one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Gen. 2:18, 21-24.

In this brief record of the first family relationship we have the basis for marriage, the home, the relations between parents and children, and the stewardship of life in the training of children for the service of God. This sacred duty is the responsibility of every father and mother in every home, Christian or non-Christian, believer or unbeliever, whether or not that responsibility is known and recognized by the parties concerned. The rearing of children, their proper training, and their education to represent God are the parents' responsibility. These involve the highest and noblest forms of stewardship, for which each parent must give account before the Judge of all the earth.

The psalmist sings of the home in which happiness and contentment dwell, where God has added His blessing to those who have faithfully sought to care for their children and to provide a home in which the principles of righteousness are taught by precept and example. "Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. . . . Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel." Ps. 128:2-6.

To make the ministry of parents effective in the preparation of their children for service for God, we are told: "Above any other agency, service for Christ's sake in the little things of everyday experience has power to mold the character and to direct the life into lines of unselfish ministry. To awaken this spirit, to encourage and rightly to direct it, is the parent's and the teacher's work. No more important work could be committed to them. The spirit of ministry is the spirit of heaven, and with every effort to develop and encourage it angels will co-operate."—*Ministry of Healing*, p. 401.

In illustration of the processes of education by godly parents seeking to train their children for the service of God is the story told by a leading worker. When he was a child, like most impressionable little folk, every new event or new development made him feel that he would like to do that particular thing when he grew up. On one occasion he came home all inspired to be a streetcar conductor. He strapped on a make-believe money changer, carried a bundle of tickets, and he rang an imaginary bell to register the fares as they were taken. Yes, when he grew up he was going to be a streetcar conductor.

But meanwhile his godly mother quietly read the Bible at family worship, and talked of God's love, of His watchcare, and of our duty and obligation to serve Him; and in her prayers for her boys she fervently prayed that God would help them to be good, honest, true, Christian boys, and when they grew up, that He would put it in their hearts to be missionaries wherever He

might call. The result was stalwart sons in service in mission lands, in the ministry of the Word, and in soul winning. There were grandsons out in the far mission fields. All these carried a burden on their hearts for the lost and undone, either at home or in heathen lands.

No greater blessing can come to parents than to see their children so trained, with such a vision of service, that they will dedicate their lives to making Christ known to the lost, even though it may mean a lifetime of separation from those they have loved most on earth, and an old age spent in loneliness because they have lent their children to the Lord as long as they live. How gladly will parents appear before the throne of God in that better land with the children He has given them, as they come to worship the Lord.

In Jacob's day it was recognized that children were the gift of God, to be trained to serve Him. In reply to Esau's question as to who these women and children were that were in the company, Jacob replied, "The children which God hath graciously given thy servant." Gen. 33:5. That Jacob endeavored to train his children in the way of the Lord (and there were twelve boys among them), to restrain their evil traits of character, and to make of them men who would love and serve God, is beautifully illustrated in the experience of Joseph, who, because of the jealousy of his brethren, was sold into Egyptian slavery. Only those who know the history of those days and the nature of a slave's life can faintly comprehend what such a prospect meant to this tenderly nurtured young man, the favorite son of an aged father. Of Joseph's experience we read:

"As the caravan journeyed southward toward the borders of Canaan, the boy could discern in the distance the hills among which lay his father's tents. Bitterly he wept at the thought of that loving father in his loneliness and affliction. . . . For a time, Joseph gave himself up to uncontrolled grief and terror. . . .

"Then his thoughts turned to his father's God. In his childhood he had been taught to love and fear Him. Often in his father's tent he had listened to the story of the vision that Jacob



saw as he fled from his home an exile and a fugitive. He had been told of the Lord's promises to Jacob, and how they had been fulfilled,—how, in the hour of need, the angels of God had come to instruct, comfort, and protect him. And he had learned of the love of God in providing for men a Redeemer. Now all these precious lessons came vividly before him. Joseph believed that the God of his fathers would be his God. He then and there gave himself fully to the Lord, and he prayed that the Keeper of Israel would be with him in the land of his exile.

"His soul thrilled with the high resolve to prove himself true to God,—under all circumstances to act as became a subject of the King of heaven. He would serve the Lord with undivided heart; he would meet the trials of his lot with fortitude, and perform every duty with fidelity. One day's experience had been the turning-point in Joseph's life. Its terrible calamity had transformed him from a petted child to a man, thoughtful, courageous, and self-possessed."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 213, 214.

Joseph's life in Egypt revealed the effect of his early training.

"Joseph's gentleness and fidelity won the heart of the chief captain, who came to regard him as a son rather than a slave. . . .

"Joseph's faith and integrity were to be tested by fiery trials. . . . He would not betray the confidence of his master on earth, and whatever the consequences, he would be true to his Master in heaven. Under the inspecting eye of God and holy angels, many take liberties of which they would not be guilty in the presence of their fellow-men; but Joseph's first thought was of God. . . .

"Joseph's real character shines out, even in the darkness of the dungeon. He held fast his faith and patience; his years of faithful service had been most cruelly repaid, yet this did not render him morose or distrustful. He had the peace that comes from conscious innocence, and he trusted his case with God. . . . God was preparing him, in the school of affliction, for greater usefulness, and he did not refuse the needful discipline."—*Ibid.*, pp. 217, 218.

"Joseph's character bore the test alike of adversity and prosperity. The same fidelity to God was manifest when he stood in the palace of the Pharaohs as when in a prisoner's cell. . . . In his early years he had consulted duty rather than inclination; and the integrity, the simple trust, the noble nature, of the youth, bore fruit in the deeds of the man."—*Ibid.*, p. 222.

"Joseph's patience and meekness under injustice and oppression, his ready forgiveness and noble benevolence toward his unnatural brothers, represent the Saviour's uncomplaining endurance of the malice and abuse of wicked men, and His forgiveness, not only of His murderers, but of all who have come to Him confessing their sins and seeking pardon."—*Ibid.*, p. 240.

The foregoing quotations are a revelation of what early childhood training and a surrendered life to God will do for men. Without that background of a godly home how different would have been the history of Joseph! The stewardship of parents is a sacred responsibility, and is filled with opportunities to shape the life and the thinking of the children entrusted to them, in order that their children should be prepared for the service of their heavenly Father.

In the days of his royal power in Egypt, Joseph recognized what all need to learn, that though men may plan evil against us, when we live a life of integrity and loyalty to God, God overrules, and every condition that must be faced is according to His plan. Joseph said to his brothers, "As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive." Gen. 50:20. How are we training our children? Are they learning to trust the guidance and control of the Father of all, to recognize His wisdom, love, and mercy?

Nor is Joseph the only outstanding Bible example of those who had a parental training that held them in the hour of trial, and that demonstrated the need for every parent, in the words of the apostle Paul, to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6:4.

We have the example of Elijah and Elisha, who stood for God in the days of Israel's almost universal apostasy; of the slave

girl in the household of Naaman, the Assyrian captain; and of Moses, who, in the charge of his God-fearing mother in his earliest years, was so faithfully taught that he never forgot his father's God, and chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Heb. 11:25, 26.

David also is an outstanding example of youth trained to believe and trust in God. Although he came as only a messenger from his father to the camp of Israel, to learn how his older brothers fared and to bring them food, his trust in God, learned in his Judean home, caused him first to question why the Israelites were inactive in the face of the challenge of Goliath, and then to accept that challenge, trusting in the might of Israel's God. With a shepherd's sling and courage bestowed by his God, he met and overcame the mightiest warrior of the Philistine host, and saved Israel in an hour of peril. It was the same deep faith taught them from childhood that led to the devotion of Isaiah and Jeremiah; to the firm stand of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah in the courts of Babylon. With their lifeblood many of the prophets witnessed in the faithful performance of their duty to God. The Sacred Record is filled with the stories of men and women trained for God's service doing deeds of might and demonstrating unfaltering loyalty and trust because of their early upbringing in homes dedicated to God.

"Religion is love, and a religious home is one in which love reigns. There must be love in action, love that flows out in all the home intercourse, showing itself in a thousand little expressions of thoughtfulness, kindness, unselfishness and gentle courtesy."—J. R. MILLER, *Week-Day Religion*, p. 81.

"These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. 6:6, 7.

Note that the work of training begins, not with the child, but with the parent. The command is, "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart." "It is impossible for parents to give their children proper training unless they first give themselves to God, learning of the Great Teacher lessons of obedience to His will."—*Counsels to Teachers*, p. 108. Then and then only can they train up the "child in the way he should go," so that "when he is old, he will not depart from it." Prov. 22:6.

Paul gives us an excellent illustration in his commendation of the training of the young man Timothy, who became his faithful companion in labor for the Gentiles, and who was prepared for the call that came to him because "that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. 3:15. His faith and his knowledge of the Scriptures were diligently taught him by his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, in whom first dwelt "unfeigned faith." (2 Tim. 1:5.) These scriptures emphasize very definitely that the outworking of a life dedicated to God has its foundation in the lives of the parents, who, because of their own godly lives, are enabled to teach their children diligently by example and by precept.

"God had commanded the Hebrews to teach their children His requirements, and to make them acquainted with all His dealings with their fathers. This was one of the special duties of every parent,—one that was not to be delegated to another. In the place of stranger lips, the loving hearts of the father and mother were to give instruction to their children. Thoughts of God were to be associated with all the events of daily life. The mighty works of God in the deliverance of His people, and the promises of the Redeemer to come, were to be often recounted in the homes of Israel; and the use of figures and symbols caused the lessons given to be more firmly fixed in the memory. The great truths of God's providence and of the future life were impressed on the young mind. It was trained to see God alike in the scenes of nature and the words of revelation. The stars of

heaven, the trees and flowers of the field, the lofty mountains, the rippling brooks,—all spoke of the Creator. The solemn service of the sacrifice and worship at the sanctuary, and the utterances of the prophets, were a revelation of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 592.

Another example of faithfulness in child training for God's service is set before us in the story of Hannah and Samuel. In her prayer for a child Hannah promised, “If Thou wilt . . . give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life.” 1 Sam. 1:11. When she had received the answer to her plea, she refused to attend the feasts for a time. She said, “I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and *there abide for ever.*” 1 Sam. 1:22.

“She loved her child with all the devotion of a mother's heart; day by day, as she watched his expanding powers, and listened to his childish prattle, her affections entwined about him more closely. He was her only son, the special gift of Heaven; but she had received him as a treasure consecrated to God, and she would not withhold from the Giver His own.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 570, 571.

While the child Samuel was still young, she brought him to Eli the high priest. Then when the offering she had brought had been slain and her vow completed she said, “For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; so long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord.” Verses 27, 28.

### *Service by Youth Their Greatest Blessing*

The modern concept is that childhood and early youth are not a time for serious labor but rather a time when the child should be left free to choose that which pleases him, to develop unhampered by the restrictions of responsibility and authority. But such a course results in a misdirected and uncontrolled manhood and womanhood, often without definite plan or continuity of purpose.

Far better is the direction of the prophet Jeremiah: "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." Lam. 3:27. Contacts through the years and observations of the results of early training in the lives of boys and girls in many lands have led to the conclusion that the bearing of a measure of responsibility under the wise direction of parents and teachers tends to develop in the individual youth a spirit of reliance, of steadiness to assigned tasks, and of respect for, and the correct relation to, leadership and authority that becomes an invaluable asset in afterlife.

In my boyhood my parents were hard put to make their meager income provide for the needs of two growing lads. No unnecessary burdens were placed upon us by our wise and loving parents. Yet for each day we were given specific duties that we were expected to perform with neatness and dispatch. We were called to account if they were not done, and rightly so. We had our hours for play, ample to keep us from being either dull or overworked by home duties. When we were in our early teens we moved to a home which included an acre of passably good land. Divided into plots for the various vegetables and small fruits, that acre became the care and responsibility of the two boys of the home. We were to plant, to cultivate, and then to sell the surplus which was not needed by the household. Although we lived only a few blocks from the school where we received our primary and grammar school training, when high school days began we had a mile to walk to school, winter or summer. Still we found time, spring, summer, and fall, to play ball; to make frequent trips to the lake two miles away for a swim; and to do the numerous other things that make up a boy's life. It was the directed activity and the responsibility that prepared us for a life of service, that has been a blessing to ourselves and, we trust, to our fellow men. It is indeed well "that a man bear the yoke in his youth." That youth's life is more productive, more happy, and by far more useful than it would be if his life had been undirected and uncontrolled.

A dear friend of mine missed this essential training. As a lad

he was permitted to make his own decisions as to work and as to his periods of recreation, without restraint and direction. He would leave a light task unfinished. When work needed to be done he would go away to have a good time with the fellows. He had his own way, and grew up with a sense of misdirection and lack of responsibility. It is small wonder that when he married, took nurses' training, and was called to the mission field, his early lack of direction and control had not prepared him for the task of fitting into a strange environment, learning a difficult language, and settling down in a mission station where he had to plan his work and carry it through, directing others as he labored. He found it impossible to *settle down*, and finally had to return home in defeat.

### *Remember Now Thy Creator*

All too many parents fail to direct the minds of their children toward the Creator. How can growing youth be expected to remember their Creator in the days of their youth (Eccl. 12:1), when parents have failed to cultivate in their lives a knowledge of God as revealed in the Scriptures, in the natural world, in the stars of heaven, and in the hidden things that modern science has brought forth from the great laboratories of the earth. Concerning the training of our children we are instructed that they should have a knowledge of these things as ever-present reminders of God and of His care and provision for them.

"Through the creation we are to become acquainted with the Creator. The book of nature is a great lesson-book, which in connection with the Scriptures we are to use in teaching others of His character, and guiding lost sheep back to the fold of God. As the works of God are studied, the Holy Spirit flashes conviction into the mind. . . .

"In these lessons direct from nature, there is a simplicity and purity that makes them of the highest value. All need the teaching to be derived from this source. In itself the beauty of nature leads the soul away from sin and worldly attractions, and toward purity, peace, and God. Too often the minds of students are

occupied with men's theories and speculations, falsely called science and philosophy. They need to be brought into close contact with nature. Let them learn that creation and Christianity have one God. Let them be taught to see the harmony of the natural with the spiritual. Let everything which their eyes see or their hands handle be made a lesson in character-building. Thus the mental powers will be strengthened, the character developed, the whole life ennobled."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 24, 25.

"Rightly understood, nature speaks of her Creator."—*Ibid.*, p. 18.

"Since the Sabbath is the memorial of creative power, it is the day above all others when we should acquaint ourselves with God through His works. In the minds of the children the very thought of the Sabbath should be bound up with the beauty of natural things. Happy is the family who can go to the place of worship on the Sabbath as Jesus and His disciples went to the synagogue,—across the fields, along the shores of the lake, or through the groves. Happy the father and mother who can teach their children God's written word with illustrations from the open pages of the book of nature; who can gather under the green trees, in the fresh pure air, to study the word and to sing the praise of the Father above. By such associations parents may bind their children to their hearts, and thus to God, by ties that can never be broken."—*Education*, p. 251.

"To him who learns thus to interpret its teachings, all nature becomes illuminated; the world is a lesson-book, life a school. The unity of man with nature and with God, the universal dominion of law, the results of transgression, can not fail of impressing the mind and moulding the character. . . .

"As the dwellers in Eden learned from nature's pages, as Moses discerned God's handwriting on the Arabian plains and mountains, and the Child Jesus on the hillsides of Nazareth, so the children of to-day may learn of Him. The unseen is illustrated by the seen. On everything upon the earth, from the loftiest tree of the forest to the lichen that clings to the rock, from the bound-



less ocean to the tiniest shell on the shore, they may behold the image and superscription of God."—*Ibid.*, p. 100.

Elsewhere the same author states: "Teach your children that God has a claim upon all they possess, a claim that nothing can ever cancel; whatever they have is theirs only in trust, as a rest of their obedience. Inspire them with ambition to gain stars for their crown by winning many souls from sin to righteousness. Money is a needed treasure; let it not be lavished upon those who do not need it. Some one needs your willing gifts."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 451.

The children thus trained will remember their Creator throughout their lives, and will be constantly reminded of their relationship to Him and of their obligations to His service.

### *When Training Is Neglected*

When early childhood training is neglected, when lessons of self-control are not taught, invariably that lack manifests itself in mature years. An outstanding example is given in the lives of the sons of Eli, of whom it is recorded, "The sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord." 1 Sam. 2:12. We read in the words of their father, "Ye make the Lord's people to transgress." Verse 24. Yet the fault lay with Eli himself. From their childhood he had permitted them to follow their own devisings; and, uncontrolled, they had developed into "sons of Belial [the devil]." No wonder the Lord permitted them to die on the field of battle when without instruction from God they went out to fight with the Philistines, taking with them the ark of the Lord. (1 Sam. 4:1-9, 19.)

A similar story is revealed in the lives of the sons of Job, of the children of Noah, and of the kings of Israel. The vast majority of these kings were brought up in the atmosphere of a worldly court, where self-seeking and evil living were commonplace, and they developed into men who forgot God and pursued pleasure and power instead of bringing efficient and honest leadership to their people.

"There is no greater curse upon households than to allow the

youth to have their own way. When parents regard every wish of their children, and indulge them in what they know is not for their good, the children soon lose all respect for their parents, all regard for the authority of God or man, and are led captive at the will of Satan. The influence of an ill-regulated family is widespread and disastrous to all society. It accumulates in a tide of evil that affects families, communities, and governments."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 579.

### *Many Were Faithful*

Zacharias and Elisabeth, those godly parents of John the Baptist, taught their only son to love God and to make God's service first in His life. Of him it was written, "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel." Luke 1:80. Of him Christ later witnessed, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Matt. 11:11.

Of Christ's boyhood it is recorded that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke 2:40, 52. It is evident that into the lives of both these boys, born in humble homes of Israel, was instilled a knowledge of the God that made them ready for their great service for Him.

"Precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:10), is the principle by which parents must implant in the hearts and minds of their children the knowledge of God. Thus their lives will become a blessing to mankind because they reveal the spirit of Christ, the Son of God. Life and example must be combined with verbal and visual instruction. Rightly coordinated, they will produce eternal results.

"In love, faith, and prayer let parents work for their households, until with joy they can come to God saying, 'Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me.' Isa. 8:18."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 196.

*In Earth's Closing Hours*

A precious experience awaits faithful parents in these closing hours of earth's history. God has promised that there will be a turning of the hearts of the fathers to their children and of the children to their fathers through the influence of His Spirit before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. (Mal. 4:5, 6.) But our part in preparation for that hour must be well and faithfully done if we are to share in the blessings to be bestowed. We are instructed:

"Every son and daughter of God is called to be a missionary; we are called to the service of God and our fellow men; and to fit us for this service should be the object of our education. This object should ever be kept in view by Christian parents and teachers. We know not in what line our children may serve. They may spend their lives within the circle of the home; they may engage in life's common vocations, or go as teachers of the gospel to heathen lands; but all alike are called to be missionaries for God, ministers of mercy to the world."—*Ministry of Healing*, p. 395.

With this message ringing in our ears, it should be the settled purpose of every father and mother to teach, train, and educate every child of the family, so that he may be ready for that sphere of service to which God may call. If we are faithful in the work of training, the Spirit of God will unite the hearts of the fathers and the children in preparation for His coming. God is ready for that hour, but are we? Our home life and relationships will themselves give the answer.



"FROM His earliest years He [Christ] was possessed of one purpose; He lived to bless others."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 70.

"His life was one long struggle against the powers of darkness. . . . No child of humanity will ever be called to live a holy life amid so fierce a conflict with temptation as was our Saviour."—*Ibid.*, p. 71.

"For nearly thirty years He lived among the wicked inhabitants of Nazareth. This fact is a rebuke to those who think themselves dependent upon place, fortune, or prosperity, in order to live a blameless life. Temptation, poverty, adversity, is the very discipline needed to develop purity and firmness."—*Ibid.*, p. 72.

"The positiveness and energy, the solidity and strength of character manifested in Christ, are to be developed in us, through the same discipline that He endured. And the grace that He received is for us."—*Ibid.*, p. 73.

"Through childhood, youth, and manhood, Jesus walked alone. In His purity and His faithfulness, He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him. . . . Filled with intense purpose, He carried out the design of His life that He Himself should be the light of men."—*Ibid.*, p. 92.

# Jesus Our Example in Stewardship

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THE Son of God came into a sinful world to minister to the needs of the lost, to place before them the true way of life, and to raise them from their sinful state to righteousness by the service and the sacrifice of His own sinless life. As the scripture so clearly and beautifully states, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Matt. 20:28. Two thousand years ago it was the custom, as it is today, for those who occupy positions of power to expect and to receive from those who were in the ordinary walks of life the consideration and service that their high position seemed to justify. In Christ's day even a captain, or centurion, of the Roman guard could command any whom he might require to render him service. Most of those in authority not only required what they were legally entitled to but often demanded much more. The master race of that day exacted service of the peoples whom they had conquered. Even among the Hebrew people, where temporary servitude was sanctioned, and where laws had been laid down with regard to redemption and liberty, the selfish hearts of the masters caused them to hedge about the rights of their servants, and to interpret the regulations so that perpetual servitude was a common condition.

It was into such a world as this, with its selfishness, greed, love for position, and worship of power, that Jesus, the Son of

God, the Prince of heaven, came to live and to serve. Among men, where He was to be a servant of servants, came the Prince of glory, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Christ knew the need of mankind. He knew just how selfish the professed people of God had become. Not to many could He say what He said to the honest scribe who confessed that to love one's neighbor as oneself was greater than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Mark 12:34. Yet Christ was willing to come into a world where sin reigned. In the councils of heaven He and the Father had agreed that the only way for mankind to be brought back to allegiance to heaven was for Christ, the Creator, to become the servant of man's necessities. The Master must become the steward of His own possession. The Redeemer must become a servant, suffer body and soul agony, and eventually die in man's stead. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. But this priceless gift was not alone the gift of the Father. Christ was party to the agreement, and willingly came to this world, knowing just what was before Him; for He, "though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." Phil. 2:6, 7, R.S.V. "Born in the likeness of men," He took upon Himself "our infirmities," our weaknesses, our inheritance, for He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15.

The God of heaven made a tremendous sacrifice to give Jesus, His only begotten Son, for man's salvation. That sacrifice was presented in type when Abraham was called of God to sacrifice Isaac, his only son, on Mount Moriah. Abraham believed God, and stood ready to carry out God's command until God's hand intervened. Then God witnessed to Abraham's faith by saying, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." Gen. 22:12. Nor did

God withhold His only Son, but "in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." 1 John 4:9.

"It was a costly sacrifice that the Lord of heaven made. Divine benevolence was stirred to its unfathomable depths; it was impossible for God to give more."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 59, 60.

The gift of Jesus to become "the unwearied servant of man's necessities" sets the measure of man's responsibility to serve others. The impelling love that brought Him into the world places upon men the necessity of likewise surrendering their lives in the service of Christ for the salvation of the lost. Christ is the example of such service; and "looking unto Jesus," studying His life and His labors, His methods and His spirit of ministry, we are to follow in the path He trod. Of Him the psalmist sings, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8. So great was His delight in the will of God, so definitely did the spirit of love fill His heart and service, that Paul speaks of that love on this wise: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8:9. Christ had all God's universe at His command. Commander of the hosts of heaven, Son of the living God, adored by the angels, He was rich beyond our greatest conception of riches. For our sakes He left all this, was born in a manger to earthly parents who were among the poorest in Israel, and was trained in the humble home of a carpenter. Through His ministry as a servant of mankind all who will follow His example in sacrifice and service may become rich. What He gave up when He left the heavenly courts to come among men He purposes to share with every son of God who will become a servant of man's necessities, a steward of His grace, and a witness for God. To make His stewardship a reality to men, He not only stooped from the heights of heaven but descended to the depths of humiliation in man's behalf.

"His feet entered upon the path of sacrifice, and turned not



aside until He had given His life. There was no rest for Him between the throne in heaven and the cross. His love for man led Him to welcome every indignity, and suffer every abuse. . . . Paul was deeply anxious that the humiliation of Christ should be seen and realized. He was convinced that if men could be led to consider the amazing sacrifice made by the Majesty of heaven, selfishness would be banished from their hearts. The apostle lingers over point after point, that we may in some measure comprehend the wonderful condescension of the Saviour in behalf of sinners. He directs the mind first to the position which Christ occupied in heaven, in the bosom of His Father; he reveals Him afterward as laying aside His glory, voluntarily subjecting Himself to the humbling conditions of man's life, assuming the responsibilities of a servant, and becoming obedient unto death, and that the most ignominious and revolting, the most agonizing,—the death of the cross. Can we contemplate this wonderful manifestation of the love of God without gratitude and love, and a deep sense of the fact that we are not our own? Such a Master should not be served from grudging, selfish motives."—*Ministry of Healing*, pp. 501, 502.

### *Our Example in Service*

Christ said to the rich young man who sought to become one of His followers, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me." Matt. 19:21. To be a true follower of Christ, one must give more than lip service to Him. The same devotion to the will of God, the same spirit of service and sacrifice that He manifested, we must display. The apostle says that Christ "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Phil. 2:7. Of that fullness of surrender we read: "His whole life was under a law of service. He served all, ministered to all. . . . The only greatness is the greatness of humility. The only distinction is found in devotion to the service of others."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 649, 650.

The kind of unselfish service that men are to render in Christ's stead He amply and vividly illustrated in the upper chamber on the night of the Passover, when He took a towel and girded Himself and washed His disciples' feet. All had come into that upper room from the dusty roads of the Judean hills. It was customary for one to take the servant's place if no servant was present to perform the task. But during their journeying that day they had been engaged in trying to determine which of them would be greatest in their Master's kingdom. Each sat silently, too proud to do the menial task of a servant. It was then that He, their Master, took a towel and girded Himself, and began to wash His disciples' feet. Not understanding the reasons for the Master's taking up their neglected task, Peter first refused to let his feet be washed when Jesus came to him. Christ said that, although Peter did not then understand the significance of His act of loving service, someday he would understand. "If I wash thee not," said Jesus, "thou hast no part with Me." When Peter, remorseful at the thought of losing his association with his Lord, offered to allow Him to wash his hands and his head also, Christ struck the crucial note by saying, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all." John 13:10. By this act Jesus placed His seal upon humble service for all His disciples then and for all time. Said He, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Verse 15. It was not an example alone of foot washing but of willingness to be used in humble service in whatever the Master might require. There is no place too lowly, no service too abasing, but that if Jesus our example would have served there, we too must follow in His steps, if we would reign with Him.

Concerning the necessity for His followers to live as He lived, to carry out the program of service that He exemplified, we are told: "Jesus did not consider heaven a place to be desired while we were lost. He left the heavenly courts for a life of reproach and insult, and a death of shame. He who was rich in heaven's priceless treasure became poor, that through His poverty we

might be rich. We are to follow in the path He trod."—*Ministry of Healing*, p. 105.

Were we today to follow His example, we would not be content to seek our own comfort, to avoid inconvenience, or to dodge responsibility for lost souls while countless millions go into Christless graves. We would be so burdened for them that our time, our strength, our hearts, and our souls would be dedicated to carrying out the program He initiated when He came into this world, not to be ministered unto, but to give His life unstintingly in ministry for others. Our stewardship would be as His, who did not His own will but the will of God who sent Him.

Of Him, Luke, in Acts 10:38, says, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." Christ was given a stewardship that made Him "the unwearied servant of man's necessity. 'He took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses' (Matt. 8:17) that He might minister to every need of humanity. . . . It was His mission to bring men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character."—*Ibid.*, p. 17.

When Christ ministered to man's needs He gave of His very life. It is written that when His garment was touched by the woman in need as she passed through the throng that surrounded Him, He felt that touch of faith. Then when He asked, Who touched Me? and Peter wondered how He could ask such a question when the crowd pressed Him on every side, Christ insisted, "Somebody hath touched Me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me." Luke 8:46. When the woman confessed her faith, which brought complete healing to her, He said, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." Verse 48. Christ's recognition of the touch of faith, the passing of virtue, of healing power, from His person to the woman in her need, is in itself evidence that when God "anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power," He was given for one purpose only, that Christ might bless needy humanity through this power committed to Him.

His sympathies were constantly drawn upon by humanity. Whether it was to feed the hungry thousands by the sea; to cast out devils from men who were held in Satan's thralldom; to return the outcast lepers to normal health and society; to bring hope to the repentant publican, forgiveness to the woman caught in sin, or strength to the paralytic at the pool—always there went forth from Him a power that helped the individual toward God, and brought healing to body and soul. He was indeed the "unwearied servant of man's necessities."

*Christ's Ministry—His Message*

In Christ's ministry there went with every act of service a message: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 4:17. When He called His twelve disciples and gave them "power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Matt. 10:1), they too were given a message to accompany their ministry to humanity's needs. Said the Saviour, "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." Verses 7, 8. Just as Christ was sent forth to minister, so Christ's disciples were empowered by Him and sent forth to bring hope and healing to men's bodies and souls. He is both our example and the one who empowers us for service.

How greatly Christ enjoyed the quiet hours spent in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany! They were an oasis in the great spiritual desert of Israel. For the most part Christ's life was spent in the open. He had no home, as such, once His ministry had begun. Said He, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Matt. 8:20. "Christ gave no stinted service. He did not measure His work by hours. His time, His heart, His soul and strength, were given to labor for the benefit of humanity. Through weary days He toiled, and through long nights He bent in prayer for grace and endurance that He might do a larger work. . . . To His workers He says, 'I have given

you an example that ye should do as I have done.' John 13:15."  
—*Ibid.*, p. 500.

"I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." John 6:38. And in another instance He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." John 4:34. Both statements embody the principle that guided His life. Never once in all His ministry did He seek His own pleasure, ease, or preference. His Father's will dominated every decision, every act, every thought of His active, unceasing ministry. The service of His Father was His food and drink. It always came first with Him.

When the hour drew near for Jesus to make the supreme sacrifice—an hour that from the beginning He knew He must face—He exclaimed, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." John 12:27, 28. And again He said, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Matt. 26:39. Gethsemane held the keys of life and death for all mankind. Christ's submission to the will of God, His carrying out of the purpose for which He had come into the world, His taking upon Himself the guilt for the sins of all mankind, was a terrible burden upon His soul; and in His agony He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. Of that hour it is said:

"He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression, and He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin. His prayer now breathes only submission: 'If this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 693.

The price of Calvary is beautifully expressed by Isaiah, the gospel prophet, in these words: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and

afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:3-6. Isaiah saw in prophetic vision the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, for he continues, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." Verse 11.

Again Paul expresses the thought of Christ's endurance of suffering, His willing submission to death, even the death on the cross with its ignominy and its agony, as he beseeches the faithful to look unto Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:2. With Christ's intense suffering in mind Paul continues, "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Verses 3, 4. What a priceless example is given us in the sufferings of Jesus! He endured all this as a part of His stewardship of service for the human race. We are exhorted to endure likewise. We are to carry out our responsibilities in stewardship as Christ carried out His, through pain and toil and contradiction of sinners, ever seeking to follow His example; ever "looking unto Jesus," both for a knowledge of the way of service and for strength to endure those tests and trials that are sure to come to every earnest, loyal follower of the Master. Victory will be ours as it was His, for we can do all things through Christ. (Phil. 4:13.)

Peter also, having been tested and tried, the dross of his character having been consumed through the things that he had learned to suffer for the sake of his beloved Master, wrote, "This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when

ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." 1 Peter 2:19-21.

To follow the example of Jesus demands a kindly heart, a loving spirit to enemies as well as to friends. It requires that we look upon every man as our brother, regardless of color, race, or creed. Every soul lost in sin is a part of our responsibility in Christ, for He came to save that which was lost. Every soul in need is a part of our stewardship, for He did not avoid the service that called upon Him to touch and cleanse the leper. He sat by the well and led the woman of Samaria to acknowledge Him as the Messiah of the Scriptures and to repent and reform. His contacts led Him into the home of the despised publican, and led the publican into the service of God. His stewardship took Him beyond the borders of Israel and into the life of the Syrophenician woman, and brought to her healing of body and soul. With the admonition, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more," He sent home forgiven the woman caught in adultery, who was about to be stoned. (John 8:3-11.)

The condemned, the outcast, men of high or low estate, found in Him a friend who sought to raise their vision to higher and holier things. He sought to bring men to the place where they could see God's love as well as His justice, His long-suffering as clearly as His determination to eradicate sin, His desire to restore men to their first estate as fully as His decision that in the renewed earth sin should have no abiding place.

Beautifully does Mrs. E. G. White describe the stewardship of Christ in His ministry for the lost. As we read this description let us picture Him as our example, ourselves as following in His footprints, and our lives giving consolation and hope and power for righteous living as did His life in every act and word. We read:

"Never was there such an evangelist as Christ. He was the Majesty of heaven, but He humbled Himself to take our nature, that He might meet men where they were. To all people, rich

and poor, free and bond, Christ, the Messenger of the covenant, brought the tidings of salvation. His fame as the great Healer spread throughout Palestine. The sick came to the places through which He would pass, that they might call on Him for help. Hither, too, came many anxious to hear His words and to receive a touch of His hand. Thus He went from city to city, from town to town, preaching the gospel and healing the sick,—the King of glory in the lowly garb of humanity."—*Ministry of Healing*, p. 22.

It is possible to be like Him only as we are fully surrendered to Him. Only as self is yielded and selfishness is obliterated from our lives can He empower us to minister as He did, giving full proof of our ministry in perfect service for mankind.



"THE message of hope and mercy is to be carried to the ends of the earth. Whosoever will, may reach forth and take hold of God's strength and make peace with Him, and he shall make peace. No longer are the heathen to be wrapped in midnight darkness. The gloom is to disappear before the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 719.

"Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. In heathen Africa, in the Catholic lands of Europe and of South America, in China, in India, in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law. Even now they are appearing in every nation, among every tongue and people."—*Ibid.*, pp. 188, 189.

"The gospel invitation is to be given to all the world, —'to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.' The last message of warning and mercy is to lighten the whole earth with its glory."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 228.

"God's faithful messengers are to go steadily forward with their work. Clothed with the panoply of heaven, they are to advance fearlessly and victoriously, never ceasing their warfare until every soul within their reach shall have received the message of truth for this time."—*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 220.

"With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come,—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin!"—*Education*, p. 271.

# The Steward's Responsibility to the World

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ENVISIONING the gathering of the sons of God in preparation for the new earth, Isaiah bursts into song with these prophetic words: "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth." Isa. 49:6. That he is speaking of the light that will reach all peoples and all nations is apparent from verse 12 of this same chapter, where he prophesies, "Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim [China]." Isaiah was given a vision of the gathering of the Gentile world to Christ. He makes the prediction not only in this chapter but elsewhere in his prophecies, as the following outstanding examples show. Isaiah also recognizes the call of God to His sons and daughters on earth to witness for Him.

"Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring My sons from far and My daughters from the ends of the earth, even every one that is called by My name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." Isa. 43:5-7. In verses 10 to 12 of the same chapter God continues the prophecy through His servant by making His chosen ones, those who are already His sons and daughters, His witnesses. Note His words: "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen:

... therefore ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God."

Isaiah also describes the condition of the world in the latter day, as shown in the following verses: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Isa. 60:1-3. In spite of education, scientific advancement, and the accumulated knowledge of the ages, greater spiritual darkness exists today than at any time in the world's history. The majority of the world's inhabitants are in revolt against God, led by some of the most astute minds ever inspired by the spirit of evil. Not only is the pagan world still largely unresponsive to the pleadings of the Spirit of God, but vast sections of the world that were once at least nominally Christian in belief are today in open rebellion against the Christian faith. Even in those lands where Christ is still accepted as the Saviour of the world a majority of the inhabitants, by their lives and often by their profession, are in the deepest spiritual darkness. We live in a day when the words of Isaiah are demonstrably true. This is the day when God's call to His children to witness that He is indeed God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, is needed to dispel the increasing darkness.

When light is given men it is their duty to witness to that light. When we have received abundantly of the grace of God, and it has brought hope and comfort to our souls, we must pass on to others the light that is ours. This is the only course open to us if we are to retain our contacts with heaven, and are to continue to receive from His boundless supply. This is the law of Christian living.

Every soul who has not found Christ, and to whom He has not become a personal Saviour, is in the class described by Isaiah as in "gross darkness." Note the words of Paul to the Ephesians, speaking of the time when they were Gentiles in the flesh: "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the common-

wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Eph. 2:12. Only those whose hope rests in Christ as a personal Saviour can meet sickness and sorrow, trouble and trial, persecution and death, in complete trust in the salvation which Heaven provides. It was this trust, this hope, that gave Abraham faith to take Isaac to Mount Moriah as a sacrifice, that caused Joseph to view the centuries of Egyptian captivity and extract a promise from his brethren that when they returned to the Promised Land they would take his bones thither with them, that caused Elijah to defy the vengeance of Queen Jezebel as he upheld the faith of Israel, that sent Daniel and his three companions to their knees to supplicate for wisdom and understanding when facing death with the wise men of Babylon, and that upheld the three worthies as they entered the fiery furnace rather than deny their faith by bowing to the golden image. It was this same trust in God that caused men in recent world wars to stand firm in the face of death rather than betray their God by weakly yielding to ungodly and unjust demands under threats of violence or even of the firing squad.

Christ said of His followers, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:14-16. It is impossible for a Christian to be true to his calling, and not be a light shining in a dark place.

A missionary was traveling by train in India. At a main junction two Mohammedan gentlemen joined him in his second-class compartment. At another station the two Moslems ordered tea from the platform vendors and offered some to the missionary. He politely refused their kind offer and thanked them for their thoughtful courtesy. A little later they offered him cigarettes, and were again met with a polite refusal. The two gentlemen began to ask questions, giving opportunity for the missionary to tell the reasons for his refusals, and to state the principles upon which those refusals were based. As he finished his explana-

tion one of them remarked, "You are not a man, but a saint."

"Far from it," replied the missionary. "I am just a man with human weaknesses, but I am endeavoring to be a true follower of Christ." Through just such simple opportunities may the Christian let his light shine. Who knows what the ultimate influence may be? A city that is set on a hill, a candle burning in a candlestick, cannot be hid. The Christian's example may be obscured for the moment by clouds of prejudice, of hatred, or of malice; but it will assuredly shine forth in brighter luster after every storm cloud, and will bear its witness to what God does in the lives of His humble children.

### *The Master's Commission to His Disciples*

The first commission of the disciples to active service is recorded in Matthew 10:1-24. They were about to enter upon the ministry that, after His ascension, would lead them into all the then-known world. They were to begin their ministry in their home country, among their own people. But "the Saviour's eye penetrates the future; He beholds the broader fields in which, after His death, the disciples are to be witnesses for Him. His prophetic glance takes in the experience of His servants through all the ages till He shall come the second time. He shows His followers the conflicts they must meet; He reveals the character and plan of the battle. He lays open before them the perils they must encounter, the self-denial that will be required. He desires them to count the cost, that they may not be taken unawares by the enemy. . . . They are to contend with supernatural forces, but they are assured of supernatural help. All the intelligences of heaven are in this army. And more than angels are in the ranks. The Holy Spirit, the representative of the Captain of the Lord's host, comes down to direct the battle. Our infirmities may be many, our sins and mistakes grievous; but the grace of God is for all who seek it with contrition. The power of Omnipotence is enlisted in behalf of those who trust in God."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 352.

Christ knew the array of evil forces that would oppose the

proclamation of the gospel. Yet He called on His disciples to go forth with the message of salvation, to carry the good news of His life and death for mankind, to go into all the world, and to reach every kindred and tongue and people in preparation for His glorious return. A promise came with the command that amply compensated for the trials and tribulations, that would be a part of the experience of every true witness for the Lord. In His closing instructions to the disciples He assured them: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:18-20.

The promise to be with them wherever they might be called to labor, in every perplexing situation that might arise, in prosperity or adversity, in success or failure, is one of the most precious that has ever been given to mankind. But it is based on conditions: His disciples must go as messengers, must give His message to all the world, and then, and then only, would He go with them to the very end. His divine power, which is available where He deems it necessary to help His loyal servants, is the reason for the remarkable feats of service and for the incredible sacrifices that men have made ever since Christ commissioned His disciples. It led them into the world to make the saving grace of Jesus known. It brought them intense opposition, but did not stop the gospel's progress. It brought physical suffering to all, yet they did not falter, but moved forward on their appointed mission as heralds of the cross. Jesus went with them, even unto death.

Their message was to go to all the world, but it was first to be preached at home, beginning at Jerusalem. From there it was to be carried to the "uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8. The results of their ministry at once became evident. Thousands responded to the call to repentance. (Acts 2:41; 4:4.) Success continued to attend their ministry, for Christ was with them. Their message did not generally appeal to the great of earth,

most of whom first considered the material prospects of accepting a new and strange message. Of Christ's own service it is written that "the common people heard Him gladly." Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

The message Christ had committed to His disciples was to be given to both Jews and Gentiles. All who believed were to be gathered into one church.

"Through the gift of the Holy Spirit the disciples were to receive a marvelous power. Their testimony was to be confirmed by signs and wonders. Miracles would be wrought, not only by the apostles, but by those who received their message."—*Ibid.*, p. 821.

The times following the life and death of Christ were days when a polished, philosophical heathenism was supreme in the Roman Empire. The sway of the emperors was so widespread as to make escape from the power of the empire almost humanly impossible. Most of the Christians of the early church came from the humbler walks of life. Many of them were slaves to their Roman masters. Yet the church grew, and the work of the disciples spread from the original center in Jerusalem to India, China, the Near East, and westward to the pillars of Hercules, and the isles of Britain. The purity of the church suffered much from its contacts with polished heathenism, including love of pleasure and sensual religion. Yet a leaven of faithful ones accepted the call of Christ. There were many during the following centuries who made their choice for Christ so definite, who modeled their lives so closely after the life of the Master, that they kept the light of truth shining undimmed during times of

great darkness, and made unmeasured contributions to the cause of Christ in all lands.

It is one of the tragic weaknesses of humanity that they fail to promote aggressively the truths they hold dear. Content with the truth found, they permit themselves to become bound by earthly ties to loved ones, home, and familiar surroundings, and fail to carry out the commission given to the entire church by the Saviour. It was true of the early church. The center of church activity had been Jerusalem. A few had carried out the Master's command to go into all the world, to preach the good news to the Gentiles. But it required persecution to scatter those that had received the Word. We are told, "At that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria. . . . They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." Acts 8:1-4. Out of that persecution came a broadening of the foundation of the church by the preaching of the scattered membership. As a result Saul of Tarsus, a principal persecutor of the church, found that He whom he persecuted was his own Lord and Master, the Messiah; and thenceforth he dedicated his life to proclaiming Christ to the Gentiles. At the time of Paul's call to service by Ananias the latter was told, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." Acts 9:15, 16. From that time till the day of his death in Rome, Paul placed his time, his talents, his life itself, at the disposal of God for the furtherance of the gospel. He endured suffering beyond that of any other apostle. Note his own testimony: "In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in



the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." 2 Cor. 11:23-28.

Of these sufferings of the great missionary apostle we read:

"Amidst the constant storm of opposition, the clamor of enemies, and the desertion of friends, the intrepid apostle almost lost heart. But he looked back to Calvary, and with new ardor pressed on to spread the knowledge of the Crucified. He was but treading the blood-stained path that Christ had trodden before him. He sought no discharge from the warfare till he should lay off his armor at the feet of his Redeemer."—*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 297.

Near the close of his eventful and exceedingly fruitful ministry, which resulted in a chain of churches extending throughout Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, Paul wrote to the young man Timothy, his companion in service: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." 2 Tim. 4:6-8.

"Well-nigh a score of centuries have passed since Paul the Aged poured out his blood as a witness for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. No faithful hand recorded for the generations to come the last scenes of the life of this holy man; but Inspiration has preserved for us his dying testimony. Like a trumpet peal his voice has rung out through all the ages since, nerving with his own courage thousands of witnesses for Christ, and wakening in thousands of sorrow-stricken hearts the echo of his own triumphant joy."—*Ibid.*, p. 513.

Paul's death is not the only one that has not been recorded for our encouragement in the hour of trial and adversity. Thousands of others, as well as the worthies mentioned in the latter

part of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, have witnessed with their lives and their deaths to their devotion and love to Christ, and to their faith in His saving grace. The same faith that sustained Paul, that held him in loyal pursuit of the objective, winning souls for the Master, has been the inspiration of thousands of His faithful messengers. The same call to duty, to suffering, to exultant and triumphant service, has been theirs. And still in this generation men are answering the call; still they count not their lives dear unto themselves. They desire to finish their course with joy and close their ministry, and thus testify to the gospel of the grace of God. (See Acts 20:24.) It is that same loyalty to the charge given by Jesus to the disciples of old that has sent many a young man and young woman into the heart of Africa, to the highlands and jungles of South America; to the countless millions lost in darkness in the villages of India; to suffering, strife-torn China; to the steamy plains and valleys of the Philippines and the East Indies; and among the wild savages of the Pacific Islands and New Guinea. This faithfulness holds them to their God-appointed tasks in the face of suffering, imprisonment, or death. It is that empowering of their divine Lord which accomplishes the humanly impossible, so that weak mortals become mighty "to the pulling down of strong holds" of the enemy.

To this service we are called by the Lord Himself. None who fail to bear that witness, to do their part in making Christ known to those still in darkness, will share with the faithful who have borne witness with their very lives in the giving of the gospel. Let us always remember that they who stay by the stuff and support the onward march of the armies of God in their advance into enemy territory will share and share alike in the ultimate rewards. But duty unfulfilled, neglected or unanswered calls to service, witness that might have been given and has been heedlessly passed by, can but rise up to condemn us in the last day. Our marching orders are "Go ye into all the world." Let us carry out our Lord's commission.

"A CHRISTIAN's day and a Christian's dollar are trusts from God."—ROBERT WILLIAMSON and HELEN WALLACE, *Stewardship in the Life of Youth*, p. 75.

"The only way to escape the peril of wealth is to recognize God who gave the power to get it."—A. R. WYANT quoted in *Money Power*, by CHARLES A. COOK, p. 72.

"The tithe is paid not simply because it is the Lord's, but because all one has, or acquires is His. Paying tithe does not constitute a man the owner of the nine-tenths that are left. God's rights in the remainder are just the same as before the tenth is paid."—CHARLES A. COOK, *Stewardship of Missions*, p. 118.

"Every man is a steward of God. To each the Master has committed His means; but man claims that means as his own. Christ says, 'Occupy till I come.' A time is coming when Christ will require His own with usury. He will say to each of His stewards, 'Give an account of thy stewardship.' Those who have hid their Lord's money in a napkin in the earth, instead of putting it out to the exchangers, and those who have squandered their Lord's money by expending it for needless things, instead of putting it out to usury by investing it in His cause, will not receive approval from the Master, but decided condemnation."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 386.

"The Lord does not come to this world with gold and silver to advance His work. He supplies men with resources, that by their gifts and offerings they may keep His work advancing. The one purpose above all others for which God's gifts should be used is the sustaining of workers in the great harvest-field. And if men, and women as well, will become channels of blessing to other souls, the Lord will keep the channels supplied. It is not returning to God His own that makes men poor; it is withholding that tends to poverty."—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 448, 449.

# Our Stewardship in Tithe Paying

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THE Lord, as Creator of the world and all that is therein, is the paramount, or supreme, owner and ruler over His realm. These are the words of the psalmist: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Ps. 24:1. And again he writes, "Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof." Ps. 50:10-12.

All that man possesses or controls, all that his eyes look upon or that his hands handle; all that man has discovered by his research either in science or by delving into the hidden treasure of the earth, is God's. Man may be entrusted with a portion of the creation; he may by virtue of his discoveries, his research, and his inventions be acknowledged by his fellow men to be the sole owner of this or that particular portion of God's creation, but in the ultimate analysis it is not his but God's. He may seem to possess and for a time control, but, as says the Scripture, "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Eccl. 9:10. We strive for possession; we accumulate little or much; we are regarded as provident or improvident by our fellow men for what we have gathered about

us or have failed to gather; but in the end we find ourselves in the position noted by Paul to Timothy: "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." 1 Tim. 6:7. Some of the rulers of the past have had their treasures buried with them in great pyramids, or tombs, hoping to use these treasures in the next world, only to have their choice possessions later disinterred and displayed to posterity. We can take nothing with us beyond the grave.

These are principles that are universally acknowledged, yet man continues to strive for increased earthly possessions, seeks rulership and power, and endeavors to dictate the course of not only his own life but the lives of his fellow men. Some seem to accomplish their purpose by winning control in political power during the brief span of their existence, only to be compelled to lay it aside for the lonely solitude of the tomb. Others seek to obtain control of power by their accumulation of wealth and financial, or industrial, power. Still others seek through their control of men and their organization of labor to bring about what can be but a temporary hold on the lives and affairs of men. Whatever may be the motive, or objective, few acknowledge the Creator and Sustainer of all things as their only rightful Owner and Sovereign. Nebuchadnezzar is not the only individual, monarch, industrialist, dictator, or business magnate who has sat in his palace and exclaimed in his pride, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?"

#### *Early in History Some Acknowledged God's Ownership*

God spoke through Moses of old, saying to Israel, "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord." Lev. 27:30. God further claims the "tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy: it shall not be redeemed." Verses 32, 33.

The patriarchal families of the Bible practiced tithing from earliest times. That the command and obligation was known to Abraham, the father of the faithful, is witnessed by the statement regarding him when he met Melchizedek, a priest of the most high God, who blessed him as he returned victorious from the pursuit of the kings: "He gave him [Melchizedek] tithes of all." Gen. 14:20.

Later in the patriarchal line Abraham's grandson Jacob made a definite promise that he would carry out God's commands regarding the tithe. He was fleeing from the wrath of his brother Esau, from whom he had taken the birthright. With a stone for a pillow, he had spent a lonely night in the open at a place that he called Bethel, and in a vision of the night he had seen the angels of God ascending and descending by a ladder reaching to heaven. In his dream God spoke to Jacob, repeating the blessing promised to his grandfather Abraham. When Jacob awoke, the record states, he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." Then the story continues: "And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. . . . And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." Gen. 28:16-22.

After Israel's deliverance from Egypt, during their training in the wilderness, they were taught many valuable lessons concerning their relationship and responsibility to God and His service. The system of tithes and offerings, which their forefathers had recognized, was established upon lasting foundations. Written laws and instruction concerning the obligations which were theirs were placed on record for their guidance and for the guidance of their children after them. Such is the instruction recorded in Leviticus 27:30-34.

But tithing was not the only obligation of a financial and material nature placed upon ancient Israel. In Exodus 23:19 we read, "The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God." In giving instruction about the burnt offerings and sacrifices in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, the Lord instructed the children of Israel to bring all these, "beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the Lord." Verse 38. Israel paid tithe on all the increase of the land, and of their herds and their flocks; and in addition they offered meat offerings, burnt offerings, drink offerings, each upon set occasions. Besides all these they made and paid vows for special favors divinely granted, and gave freewill offerings for the service of God. Of their annual income fully 25 per cent went in some form into the maintenance of the worship of Jehovah. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 527.)

The wise man says in Proverbs 3:9, "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase." There is something peculiarly outstanding about the blessing that came to Israel because of their faithfulness in support of God's worship. As a people they prospered personally and nationally. The fruit of their fields, their vineyards and their groves, was greatly increased. Their flocks and their herds were multiplied. Israel was prospered, blessed of the Lord, and stood high in their national life and influence among the surrounding nations. It was when they departed from God; failed of fulfilling His requirements; became worldly, idolatrous, and wicked; and robbed God in tithes and in offerings that the results were evident in national decline, and finally in complete overthrow, exile, and scattering to the four corners of the earth.

Of the offering of the first fruits, one of the numerous offerings appointed to them, we read:

"Even before the tithe could be reserved, there had been an acknowledgment of the claims of God. The first that ripened of every product of the land, was consecrated to Him. The first of the wool when the sheep were shorn, of the grain when the

wheat was threshed, the first of the oil and the wine, was set apart for God. So also were the first-born of all animals; and a redemption price was paid for the first-born son. The first-fruits were to be presented before the Lord at the sanctuary, and were then devoted to the use of the priests.

"Thus the people were constantly reminded that God was the true proprietor of their fields, their flocks, and their herds; that He sent them sunshine and rain for their seed-time and harvest, and that everything they possessed was of His creation, and He had made them stewards of His goods."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 526.

### *The Results of Unfaithfulness*

Early in the history of Israel unfaithfulness resulted in the slackening of the work appointed to the tribe of Levi. Unsupported in the way that God had ordained, these ministers of the sanctuary and the synagogue sought sustenance in other pursuits. Later Nehemiah pointed out the same situation: "I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field." Neh. 13:10. Nehemiah contended with the rulers of Israel, saying, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" Verse 11. He called the rulers together, placed the situation squarely before them, and pointed out their duty. "Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries." Verse 12. A reformation was effected that restored the full worship of the temple, with the proper services rendered by the Levites and singers, so that God was honored and the work of the sanctuary maintained.

When the rank and file of the church fails to support the church activities, when the payment of the tithes is either neglected or only slighted, and when the offerings drop because of carelessness or selfishness on the part of the people of God, the church workers turn to ordinary pursuits. This may be honorable, but the work that they should be doing for others, ministering to the needs of men's souls, is neglected. Then care-



lessness and worldliness creep into the church. When the teaching of the Scriptures is neglected, God is forgotten, and men slip from the firm foundations of truth.

*The Divine Plan for the Support of Those Who Minister*

That the divine plan of paying tithe for the support of those who ministered in holy things was a requirement that none could safely neglect is indicated in Numbers 18:21, where we are told, "Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." In verse 20 Aaron was told, "Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel." Had Israel and had the church of God through the ages been faithful in paying their tithe and bringing in their offerings for the support of those who ministered in holy things, there would never have been a lack for the maintenance of the ministry or in funds to proclaim the gospel message to all the world.

In the days of the apostles, when they ministered so effectually in preaching the gospel of the kingdom and made known Jesus as the Saviour of mankind, the support of the gospel worker was placed by the apostle Paul on those who had been brought to a knowledge of the gospel. He wrote: "He that ploweth should plow in hope; and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." 1 Cor. 9:10-14.

Though the apostle worked to support himself, nevertheless he laid down the principle that the gospel worker should be

supported by the gospel; that is, "live of the gospel." He recognized the principle of the church's supporting the chosen workers in the Bible way. Christ also upheld this principle when He gave charge to His disciples as He sent them forth on their first tour of evangelism. His instructions were, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor script for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat." Matt. 10:9, 10. They were to find support, their daily sustenance, among those for whom they labored. They were, from the very beginning of their labors, to teach and train the converts to Christ so that they would contribute to the support of the work which the apostles were doing for their Master.

Certain of the scribes and Pharisees were very particular about tithing, even to garden herbs, such as mint and anise and cummin, but were not faithful in their spiritual relationships. They were harsh and unloving in their judgment, unmerciful in their relationship to the poor and needy, and faithless in their attitude toward Christ and the mission He had come to carry out. Christ commended them for their faithfulness in tithing, but He condemned them for their unfaithfulness in the kindly and deeply spiritual aspects of their religious life. (Matt. 23:23.) The two must be close companions if religious profession and true living are rightly to represent the character of God. Neither can be neglected and man's life be acceptable in the sight of heaven. The Christian must live the life of Christ before his fellow men and do his part in making it possible for the gospel of the kingdom to be preached as a witness to all nations.

In every age there has been a tendency for God's professed children to forget or neglect their obligation to support His work in behalf of men. Israel continually lapsed into a careless attitude, so that God was compelled to send them warnings against their neglect as well as entreaties to faithfulness. Nehemiah, as previously noted, was strong in his handling of Israel's neglect after the return from the Babylonian captivity. Those who had returned were among the most faithful in Israel. They had accepted the call to return to the land of Canaan. They had rebuilt

the Temple and re-established the worship of God in its sacred courts. But they had quickly forgotten their obligation to support the work of God, and had begun to neglect the payment of tithe and the presentation of the required offerings, leaving the priests and Levites without material support, so that they had turned to their fields to eke out a living. Nor did this call to repentance end the neglect, for a few years later the prophet Malachi brought again to Israel a message from the Lord, saying, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation." Mal. 3:8, 9. It is evident that the entire nation had again grown careless of their obligations to the Temple and to the spiritual life of Israel. They no longer felt the responsibility for the support of the religious services of the nation. God, through His servant, struck at their neglect in the strongest language. "Ye have robbed Me," He asserts. Not, Ye have robbed the priests, or the Temple, or the services; ye have robbed Me, your Creator, the Giver of all things. I asked a tenth in recognition of My ownership, and ye have withheld that which is My own. "Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation."

An underlying cause of the calamities that come upon individuals, families, homes, churches, and nations is their neglect in carrying out the instruction of God concerning the support of the gospel. If every Christian were to pay a faithful tithe on his entire income and give freewill offerings as God has prospered him, there would be ample for the support of the gospel, and the work of the commission would be quickly carried out. There would be no lack in the home churches, no curtailments of the advance in mission lands, no loss of income or inability to obtain the necessities of life on the part of the faithful.

#### *God's Gracious Invitation*

God did not give a message only of denunciation to the children of Israel through Malachi. He also added an invitation and a promise. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there

may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal. 3:10-12.

God has never compelled men to recognize His claims upon them and the things He has entrusted to their care. He sets His claims before them, His rightful ownership of all, as their Creator and the One who sustains them and provides for their daily needs; but He leaves the choice to men, giving them knowledge of what the results of a wrong course will be. He can rebuke the devourer; He can bless with abundant fruitage; or He can withdraw His hand; and of necessity man suffers because God has removed His protection. Fortunately for man, even when he is in rebellion against God, "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. 5:45. Otherwise, many would perish because of the curse that rests upon all creation as the result of man's transgression.

But God's special blessing rests upon those who recognize His claims, and to them He gives abundantly if they are faithful in all things. "Prove Me now herewith," is a very real thing to many of God's children; and they have experienced His blessing so definitely, so realistically, that we are constrained to illustrate how He has fulfilled His promises in individual cases as well as in the work and progress of the final gospel message.

When S. M. Colgate, of the great soap-manufacturing firm of Colgate and Company, began to manufacture soap he entered into a covenant with the Lord that he would pay a tithe of his profits for the support of the gospel. From the very inception of his program God blessed, and the business prospered. As income increased, he raised the amount of his gifts to the cause of God till he was contributing half of all he made to the proclamation of the gospel. Humble men and women everywhere have

tested God's program and promises, and here are a few illustrations from their experience.

*Money Order for a Thousand Francs*

"I am twenty-nine years old. My parents are Adventists, but for different reasons I did not respond to the call of God until recently. In fact, I was only baptized at the beginning of this year.

"I have been in a tuberculosis sanatorium for five years—at first in France, where I have always lived, then in Switzerland. For lack of resources I have not paid tithe.

"Recently I have received a bit of money as a gift, and I have also been able to sell some things which I have made myself, so I decided to pay tithe (on the whole), which was ten Swiss francs. Having permission to go to church Sabbath morning, I was very happy to go there and place this sum in an envelope.

"On Monday, just two days after, I received a money order for one thousand Swiss francs covering my invalid pension which I had not been able to have for three years. This was suspended because I had left France during the war, in 1944, and now it was coming as a reimbursement for all back payments which were due.

"Is this not truly a marvelous blessing? As for me, I see in it a certain proof that if one serves God faithfully, if one returns willingly the part that is due Him on that which He gives, one receives rich blessings.

"It is with joy that I give you this testimony and send you my sincere greetings. France."—*Review and Herald*, Oct. 23, 1947.

*An Archbishop Who Paid Tithe*

"My heavenly Father has blessed me abundantly with earthly gifts, peace of mind, and most of all sending me the Advent message, the most cherished gift of all.

"My first office employment was with a legal firm. One of my duties was typing wills, and on one occasion I came across the account of an archbishop who paid tithes. This was an inter-

esting experience for me. This deceased Anglican archbishop had been a wealthy man, and the will stated he had paid a tithe to God throughout his lifetime.

"By copying the will and checking it I became interested and decided to pay God my tithe also. To the best of my knowledge from that time on I have paid tithe.

"When I heard the Advent message I entered in a fuller way into the knowledge of tithing, and I paid all my arrears as soon as I cashed my worldly belongings. Before I received the Advent message I had purchased a thirty-acre plot at \$2,000 in 1941. When property started to rise in price I trusted in God to send me a purchaser at the proper time, and in 1946 I pledged God 30 per cent of the total price for His work. In April, 1947, I received \$30,000 for the land. I paid my pledge immediately.

"I thank God for His rich blessings to me and my four dependents, and for my speedy recovery after a recent illness. Canada."—*Ibid.*, Oct. 30, 1947.

#### *Investment Multiplied Ten Times*

"Just a few lines regarding our experience in paying tithe. We are farmers, and for sixty-three years we have been connected in full membership with this movement. All these years we have endeavored to pay an honest tithe, deducting only actual costs paid out for materials, such as feed and supplies. About twenty years ago we decided to pledge the Lord ten per cent on gross income for tithe, and five per cent on the same for Sabbath school Investment. The twelfth year Satan made it hard for us to meet our vow. But his efforts did not change our purpose. Every year thereafter was easier until our tithe and Sabbath school Investment multiplied ten times, and what was left for our use was many times more than before. God has been very good to us. Oklahoma."—*Ibid.*, Jan. 8, 1948.

#### *"God Makes a Difference"*

"I was visiting with a brother on his farm in the state of Morelos when he told me that he wished to see me the following morning quite early. So it was that I was up at sunrise and off with

this brother to a certain part of his farm. We sat down near his tomato plants and near the dividing line of his neighbor's farm, which was also planted in tomatoes. As we sat there looking down the even rows of tomatoes, our good brother was telling me how the Lord had blessed him and given him a real experience in 'proving God.' He said to me, 'My brother, God does make a difference with those who recognize His ownership and return to Him the tithe and offering.' He continued, 'Do you see this row of tomatoes? This is on my place, and that next row is on my neighbor's ranch.'

"I said, 'Yes, but I don't see much difference between them.'

"Our brother talked on, until the sun came out strong. And as he was talking he again called my attention to the two rows of tomatoes. I looked with surprise, for before my eyes I could see that the neighbor's were beginning to wilt and fall over. Our brother said, 'Last night we had a killing frost, which indeed killed my neighbor's plants, but, as you see, His protection and blessing have been over mine.' Truly God makes a difference with those that love and serve Him. Mexico."—*Ibid.*, March 4, 1948.

*"The Lord Kept His Promises"*

"Years ago I was living on a homestead in Saskatchewan. That summer I made a substantial pledge at camp meeting, and of course I had tithe to pay on the proceeds of the crop. The season was such that we had little to harvest but weeds. I threshed only a little over 100 bushels of wheat, and about 300 bushels of very green oats; and I had to borrow money from the bank to pay the thresher's bill. I traded some old straw for a load of coal, which I used in the coldest weather; the rest of the winter I burned weed seeds. Twenty dollars covered all my expenses from January till June.

"I was to repay the bank at the end of March out of my oats; but at current price the oats would not have been sufficient to pay off the debt, and I should have been left entirely without feed for my horses. But as the time drew near, the Lord began to speak to my heart and say, "What about the camp meeting pledge and

the tithe? That is My money, and I expect to be honored before the bank." I told Him that as far as I was concerned that would be all right with me; but how was I to explain that to the satisfaction of the hard-headed, practical banker? The Lord was firm about the matter. He gave me conviction that I must trust Him to see me through; and as an encouragement to my weak faith, He gave me the assurance that He would give me back this \$40 if I would pay it in first.

"So on the last day of March with shaky knees and a lump in my throat I entered the bank to brave the wrath of the manager. He happened to be out in the general office, and as soon as he saw me, he said, 'I suppose you want to renew that note.' I lost no time in saying 'Yes,' and then I said, 'Thank you, Lord.' That was all there was to my ordeal, after all my fears.

"But that is not all the story. At that time oats were worth very little, and no one had any money to buy them at any price. It was not until two months later that I was able to dispose of them; and in the meantime the prices went up enough for me to realize \$40 more for them than I could have had in March. The Lord kept both of His promises. He both saw me through my perplexity, and repaid me that which I paid Him."—*Ibid.*, May 13, 1948.

God has set before the church in the last days a tremendous task. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. 24:14. To make possible the carrying out of this prophecy of the Saviour, the Lord commanded His disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, . . . and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:19, 20. Later Christ revealed to John, as recorded in the Revelation, that a great movement would come into being just before the end, which, like an angel flying in the midst of heaven, would preach the everlasting gospel "unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and



earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev. 14:6, 7.

The giving of this message was to precede the second coming of Jesus in power and great glory, for says the prophet in verses 14 and 15, "I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe." It is the time of the harvest, the end of the world. (Matt. 13:39.) It is in the days just preceding the end of the world that the swift-moving messengers of warning and of mercy will proclaim with power "the everlasting gospel," the "gospel of the kingdom," and the Advent of the Saviour in majesty and glory. The people who proclaim that message are the remnant church, those that "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12. The work they are to do just before the coming of the Saviour is under the care of an all-wise heavenly Father, whose heart yearns over the lost.

"Very precious to God is His work in the earth. Christ and heavenly angels are watching it every moment. As we draw near to the coming of Christ, more and still more of missionary work will engage our efforts. The message of the renewing power of God's grace will be carried to every country and clime, until the truth shall belt the world. Of the number of them that shall be sealed will be those who have come from every nation and kindred and tongue and people. From every country will be gathered men and women who will stand before the throne of God and before the Lamb."—*Counsels to Teachers*, p. 532.

Because God holds very precious the work of warning mankind of the Saviour's appearing, He expects those to whom He has entrusted this work to hold it equally dear and to make those sacrifices in material things which will quickly bring the knowledge of Christ's salvation to all the world.

"We are to praise God by tangible service, by doing all in our power to advance the glory of His name. God imparts His gifts

to us that we also may give, and thus make known His character to the world. Under the Jewish economy, gifts and offerings formed an essential part of God's worship. The Israelites were taught to devote a tithe of all their income to the service of the sanctuary. Besides this they were to bring sin-offerings, free-will gifts, and offerings of gratitude. These were the means for supporting the ministry of the gospel for that time. God expects no less from us than He expected from His people anciently. The great work for the salvation of souls must be carried forward. In the tithe, with gifts and offerings, He has made provision for this work. Thus He intends that the ministry of the gospel shall be sustained. . . . All are to be devoted to the sending of the gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 300.

The three angel's messages are a definite recognition of God's ownership of all, a call to return completely to allegiance to Him and to a recognition of His rightful claims upon all the resources entrusted to us. Says the first of the three angels, "Fear God, and give glory to Him, . . . and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev. 14:7.

Answering the call of this message in preparation for our Lord's return demands obedience, loyalty, and devotion. It will cause everyone who truly accepts the message to acknowledge God's ownership of all—His just claims upon our possessions, our time, our talents, and our children, for by Him they were created, and by Him they are caused to continue in our possession. In devoting them to the work of making Him known as the creator and upholder of all, we are but returning to Him His own.

"GOD has made men His stewards. The property which He has placed in their hands is the means that He has provided for the spread of the gospel. To those who prove themselves faithful stewards He will commit greater trusts."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 529.

"As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth's history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand stedfastly for the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble,—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation,—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God's saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a "God of gods," able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 513.

"As God so liberally bestows His gifts on you, remember that it is in order that you may return them to the Giver, multiplied by being imparted."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 273.

"Spiritual prosperity is closely bound up with Christian liberality. The followers of Christ should rejoice in the privilege of revealing in their lives the beneficence of their Redeemer. . . . Let them seek to retain their possessions for selfish purposes, and it will be to their eternal loss. But let their treasure be given to God, and from that moment it bears His inscription. It is sealed with His immutability."—*Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 344, 345.

# Our Stewardship in Freewill Offerings

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FROM the day of man's creation, when he was placed in the Garden of Eden to "dress it and to keep it," his loyalty to God has been under test. "God commanded man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2:16, 17.

"At the very beginning of man's existence a check was placed upon the desire for self-indulgence, the fatal passion that lay at the foundation of Satan's fall. The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden, was to be a test of the obedience, faith, and love of our first parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. They were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan; but if they endured the trial, they would finally be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favor with God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 48, 49.

The laws of heaven were under trial, as well as man's loyalty to them. Satan had fallen from his exalted position in the presence of God. He had accused God of arbitrariness and harshness, of unfairness in His dealings with himself and with the angels who cast in their lot with him. God had given Satan free rein to prove his contention. He was permitted to place temp-

tation before the newly created pair in Eden, and he immediately put his evil plans in operation, seeking to seduce Adam and Eve. He was only too successful, and "so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5:12.

Through the intervening centuries until now man has been constantly subjected to similar tests of his loyalty, of his willingness to submit his will to the will of God, of his selfishness or unselfishness, and of his regard for those obligations which he owed to his heavenly Father. A beautiful illustration of faithfulness under testing is found in the life of Joseph. God desired to use him for responsibilities that few are called upon to carry. But first he must be tested and tried. Would he withstand the temptations that Satan would place before him? Would he be worthy of the responsibilities to which he would be called? The record tells us that "they [his brothers] drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt." Gen. 37:28. Joseph, sold into slavery, well knew what the fate of a slave would be. We are told that at first Joseph gave himself up to uncontrolled grief and despair; but as he journeyed southward and passed the hills beyond which lay his father's tents, he remembered his father's God and the teaching that he had received at home, and then and there he determined to be true to Jehovah. He faced slavery in the house of Potiphar, his first master, and soon won his way into his master's heart. But the testing, the temptation, and the trials had just begun. In the house of Potiphar he again met the test of loyalty, and went to prison rather than do wrong. In prison, although he won the favor of his jailer, he again met with ingratitude and disappointment, and remained in prison. He faithfully served until finally he was remembered, brought in to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, and soon made second ruler of the land under the king. Joseph's greatest test came, however, in his attitude as ruler of Egypt when his brothers came to him after his father's death, fearful that now he would take vengeance on them for their cruelty in selling him into slavery. It was common practice in king's courts for those in power thus to

revenge themselves on their enemies. Joseph met this test also with kindness and magnanimity, saying, "Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Gen. 50:19, 20.

Joseph recognized the hand of God in the trials, the tests, and the experiences of life. So firmly did his faith reach out to the fulfillment of God's promises that he "took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." Verse 25. Joseph's response to God's call to serve Him at all times, his meeting faithfully every test of his loyalty and devotion, has stood throughout the centuries as a glorious example of integrity. "God was preparing him, in the school of affliction, for greater usefulness."—*Ibid.*, p. 218. Every trial that we are called upon to endure, every sacrifice that we are asked to make, is but the preparatory school for a wider field of service and to a broader basis of sacrifice. This was true of every child of God in Bible times; it is equally true of God's children today.

Another outstanding example in Bible times is Moses. Although he had every opportunity for worldly success, "when he was come to years," he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Heb. 11:23-26. Even then God found it necessary to train him by forty years of exile in the wilderness of Sinai as a shepherd. Then came his call from the quiet of the wilderness to lead, in God's own way, a nation of slaves from captivity to the Promised Land. He also had his Red Sea test of faith, his wilderness trials with a rebellious people, his disappointments, and at last God's refusal to allow him to enter the Promised Land. Surely, "he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." Verse 27. He was tried, as it were, by fire; but he kept his faith, and was resurrected soon after his death on Pisgah and taken into the heavenly family.

*The Requirement to Meet God's Call Today*

Just as these and other men of faith and spiritual power in earlier times had special calls to service, sacrifice, and trial, so God has given the remnant church a definite call, a tremendous task, and tests and trials to prove them and their willingness to suffer and sacrifice for Him.

God's call for this day is voiced in the challenging words of Mark's Gospel: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. To make possible the accomplishment of this worldwide proclamation of the gospel, Christ laid down definite principles that should guide His disciples. As He called Peter, James, and John (Luke 5:10) He said to Simon Peter, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." The record continues, "When they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him." Verse 11. In these words a great and living principle is set forth. These disciples were called to serve with Christ, to become fishers of men, to "catch men" for the kingdom of God. To follow Christ as they should, demanded that they leave family, home, and their previous means of livelihood. They must forsake all, and give themselves wholly to their calling as ministers of Christ. They were as fully called to the priesthood and the service of the sanctuary as were the sons of Aaron and the tribe of Levi, and they were no longer to have any other interest; but they were to dedicate their every power to the service of God.

Later in Christ's ministry He was approached by a young ruler who asked what he should do to inherit eternal life. When the Saviour declared that the keeping of the commandments was an indication of righteous living, this man replied, "All these have I kept from my youth up." Christ then said to him, "Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast; and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me." This Christ did, testing him. The ruler was rich and loved his riches and the prestige and power that his riches gave. Christ's reply made him "very sorrowful." He clung to his

earthly possessions and refused the call and the conditions of the call, causing the Saviour to say, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Luke 18:18-25. Anything that, in the mind of the individual, is of greater importance than serving and sacrificing with, and for, Christ, will separate the individual from Christ, and make it impossible for him to attain a place in the kingdom of God. In other words, a Christian must be prepared to make Christ and His service first in his life. He must, like the cobbler William Carey, who became the first great missionary to the Hindus of India, be able to say in all sincerity, "My work is to preach Christ; I cobble shoes to make a living." The time came when he no longer cobbled shoes for a living, but began the work which built a foundation for the Christian church in the province of Bengal among the heathen.

To make it possible for the carrying of the gospel to the pagan world by the early church, we are told that "when they [the disciples] had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." Acts 4: 31-35.

In the time of the apostles many of the church members were cut off from their normal means of support. Those who were well to do, in partaking of the spirit of sacrifice to which Christ had called them, went further than supporting the work of the apostles in the preaching of the gospel; they took under their care and protection their poorer brethren, selling their possessions



and sharing the common hospitality of the church in Jerusalem. They were willing to go where the young ruler would not; they sold their possessions, gave to the poor, and followed the Master, who said of Himself, "The Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Matt. 8:20.

"This liberality on the part of the believers was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit. The converts to the gospel were 'of one heart and of one soul.' One common interest controlled them, —the success of the mission entrusted to them; and covetousness had no place in their lives. Their love for their brethren and the cause they had espoused was greater than their love of money and possessions. Their works testified that they accounted the souls of men of higher value than earthly wealth."—*Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 70, 71.

One of the greatest dangers that the Christian must face is the tendency of the human heart to covet. Said the Saviour to some of His followers: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Luke 12:15. How many have discovered the truthfulness of these words as a result of the second world war! In Europe, in Japan, in the Philippines, in Indonesia, in Burma, wherever the battle raged, destruction upon destruction took place. Men lost all they possessed. The accumulated wealth of years melted like the snow before the summer sun. The victims were happy to escape with their lives and the few clothes, oftentimes only rags, that were left upon their backs. Homes became piles of rubble; public buildings were mere shells of their former grandeur, though they had been hailed once as places of refuge in time of distress. A few moments or hours or possibly days, and man's plans and labors of decades, even centuries, disappeared. People who had been wealthy even beyond the fondest dreams of most men, gladly found refuge in damp cellars, in the shadow of tottering walls, or in the dark recesses of the forest. Truly a man's "life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." We are told that the time will come when we shall no longer be able to give to the furtherance of the

gospel, for the work will all be finished. Then it will be too late. Christ was seeking to bring this truth home to the hearts of His disciples, and to the church down to the end of time, in the foregoing admonitions.

Later in this same chapter He says directly to His disciples, "Seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Verses 31-34.

God has a care for His faithful ones. When they manifest faith in Him by giving themselves and their all to the advancement of His kingdom, He sees that they have enough of the necessities of life to sustain them and to enable them to continue in His service. Strength is given them to earn their daily bread and to provide shelter for them under whatever conditions He may call them to live. It is His good pleasure to give His children the kingdom, for it "shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." Dan. 7:27.

### *Bearing the Cross of Jesus*

Christ went further in His call to sacrifice and service than the relation of His disciples to material possessions. He takes His chosen ones into such close relationship to Himself as to call for separation, where this is necessary, from loved ones, family, and friends. Says He, "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:26, 27. He Himself set the example. He did not count heaven and His position with the Father a thing to be grasped while we were lost. He made Himself of no reputation, took the form of a man, served men as a servant of servants,

healed their sicknesses, cleansed the lepers, and cast out devils. Without home, and with but few who were willing to cast in their lot with Him, Christ lived a life of sacrifice, and at last suffered and died on the cross of Calvary, with the agonizing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Yet in and through His whole life He submitted His will to the will of Him that sent Him. When He asks us to place His service first, and let all earthly relations take second place, He asks no more than He Himself has given. He gave all to save sinners like you and me. In asking us to dedicate our lives and our all to His service, willingly separating from friends and loved ones, He is but asking that which is obvious for us to expect. And He has shown the way.

But Christ would have us count the cost. It is not well to begin to build a tower and be unable to finish it. Nor should a king go to war when he has insufficient men or equipment to meet and defeat the enemy. (Luke 14:28-32.) If you are planning to serve with Christ, count the cost. It may take all that you have in this world to win the victory in Him. It may separate you from home and homeland, from family and friends, possibly till the day of the great ingathering, possibly forever. It may lead you to the dungeon in companionship with saints of all past ages, to the block, to the scaffold, to a grave on some lonely mountain-side or valley, to some resting place among the heathen to whom you have gone with the good news of salvation. But do not forget—He has been there before you, and He will go with you. The promise to those who follow Christ all the way is, "He shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." Mark 10:30. We must count the cost, but it will be worth all the toil and suffering and sacrifice entailed to be able to follow our Lord, and at last to dwell with Him.

Let us not forget the Saviour's closing word of admonition: "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:33.

*Much Will Be Required*

The basic principle on which Christ says we shall be judged is stated in the following words: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." Luke 12:48. Christ also admonished His disciples, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Matt. 10:8. If God has blessed us abundantly in spiritual and physical blessings, we shall be counted unfaithful to our trust if we are niggardly in bestowing these blessings upon those who need them. If we are gifted intellectually, more will be required of us than of one having only common attainments or abilities. If we are blessed with health and strength, and could, if we would, undertake great things for God that require health and strength and moral and physical power to do them, and excuse ourselves from the call, we must expect to be called to account in the day of judgment. "Freely ye have received, freely give," is far more than the distribution of largess or the careless giving away of earthly possessions. It is the giving of oneself with the gift, and giving with the same love for human souls lost in sin as Christ had.

"As our blessings and privileges are increased,—above all, as we have before us the unparalleled sacrifice of the glorious Son of God,—should not our gratitude find expression in more abundant gifts to extend to others the message of salvation? The work of the gospel, as it widens, requires greater provision to sustain it than was called for anciently; and this makes the law of tithes and offerings of even more urgent necessity now than under the Hebrew economy."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 528, 529.

The divine standard of giving in material things is stated by Paul in writing to the Corinthians as being "as God hath prospered." This has been the standard all through the centuries. Few have lived up to it. If Christian men and women had been faithful in giving as God prospered them, the work of God would long since have been accomplished. The message of God's

saving grace would have gone to all mankind, Christ would have returned in glory, and sin would have been forever banished. Neglect and selfishness have delayed His glorious appearing and the establishment of His kingdom.

Lest we should be included among those who have forgotten their obligations to God in giving the gospel quickly to all the world, we are admonished, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." John 4:35. This statement receives further emphasis: "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest." Luke 10:2. Never before have the words of the Saviour been more in need of emphasis to the church of God than today. The calls for workers are far beyond the power and resources of the treasury of the church to fill. Openings in all lands and among all peoples are laid before us. Some have been pleading for months, some for years. New interests constantly come to light. Thousands have been brought to the light of truth in Africa, in Europe, in South America, in Asia, even in the midst of strife and confusion. The island fields of the world are responding to God's call, and these words of Isaiah cause us to think of a closing work, soon to be finished: "The isles shall wait for His law." Eighty thousand faithful servants of Jesus have come from the Caribbean islands and bordering countries alone. They have waited for His law, and tens of thousands are getting ready for Christ's appearing.

When Paul, the missionary apostle to the Gentile world, saw in vision a man from Macedonia calling to him, his response was prompt. "Immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them." Acts 16:10. As to Paul came a vision of a people in need of the gospel, so to us now there should come a vision of the world in need. It will come if we lift up our eyes unto the fields. The world's need is so urgent, the despair of men outside of Christ is so real, that we should

awaken, prepared to make any sacrifice, and go when and where the Master may call. The last message of mercy is the only thing that can give men hope and assurance in these days of chaos and strife. It is the only remedy for the woes of mankind. It alone can bring peace to the heart and hope for a brighter, fairer world in which righteousness shall dwell. Is it not worth all we have? Does not its promise lighten your own future? Will you not share that light, that promise, that hope, with other souls that now grope along the dark ways of sin and suffering?

"From all countries the Macedonian cry is sounding, 'Come over and help us.' God has opened the fields before us, and if human agencies would but co-operate with divine agencies, many, many souls would be won to the truth. But the Lord's professing people have been sleeping over their allotted work, and in many places it remains comparatively untouched. . . .

"Our church members should feel a deep interest in home and foreign missions. Great blessings will come to them as they make self-sacrificing efforts to plant the standard of truth in new territory."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 46-49.

"If there was ever a time when sacrifices should be made, it is now. Those who have money should understand that now is the time to use it for God."—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 450.

"UNSELFISH liberality threw the early church into a transport of joy; for the believers knew that their efforts were helping to send the gospel message to those in darkness. Their benevolence testified that they had not received the grace of God in vain. What could produce such liberality but the sanctification of the Spirit? In the eyes of believers and unbelievers it was a miracle of grace. . . .

"A continual imparting of God's gifts wherever the cause of God or the needs of humanity demand our aid, does not tend to poverty. 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.' Prov. 11:24. The sower multiplies his seed by casting it away. So it is with those who are faithful in distributing God's gifts. By imparting they increase their blessings."—*Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 344, 345.

"When Christ abides in the soul, the thought of reward is not uppermost. This is not the motive that actuates our service. It is true that, in a subordinate sense, we should have respect to the recompense of reward. God desires us to appreciate His promised blessings. But He would not have us eager for rewards, nor feel that for every duty we must receive compensation. We should not be so anxious to gain the reward as to do what is right, irrespective of all gain. Love to God and to our fellow-men should be our motive."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 398.

# The Blessings of Faithful Stewardship

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ALL true stewardship has as its actuating principle a willing heart and mind. We serve or sacrifice not because we must but because we love the service, rejoice in sacrifice, and are happy only when we can join our Saviour in actively working to help others. In earliest times God sent a message to Israel, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My offering." Ex. 25:2. None who begrudged the gift, or who would afterward regret that he had made it, was to come. There were to be no Ananiases or Sapphiras in the group of givers. Each was to come with his gift to the leaders of Israel "willing with his heart," and lay it at their feet.

The same actuating principle is applied to giving by Paul when he commends the churches of Macedonia, saying, "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift. . . . And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord." 2 Cor. 8:1-5.



They first gave themselves with all their hearts unto the Lord, and there blossomed in their lives the true spirit of liberality that caused them to give beyond that which had been expected of them, so that they abounded in the riches of their liberality, even when in poverty themselves. It is one of the miracles of true Christian living that those who are poor in this world's goods, yet rich in faith, give liberally to the cause of God.

Some years ago there came under my observation a gentle old woman who regularly attended the church of which I was acting as pastor. She always wore a smile of happiness, was always present when it was possible for her to make the journey across the city by streetcar to the place of worship. She was a source of courage to everyone who knew her.

Later the conference asked me to audit the books of the church treasurer. As I checked through these accounts item by item I was surprised to see this good sister's name appearing with such frequency in the records of tithe and offerings as to make me wonder whether she was more well to do than her plain, unostentatious appearance indicated. I inquired from those who had long known her, and was informed that she had no property, so far as they knew, but earned her living by taking in washing, scrubbing floors, and doing similar labors. Quietly, without publicity, she had been giving as much as, if not more than, any other individual in the church, and paying a faithful tithe as well. It is such faithfulness as this that receives the commendation of God.

"However short our service or humble our work, if in simple faith we follow Christ, we shall not be disappointed of the reward. That which even the greatest and wisest can not earn, the weakest and most humble may receive. Heaven's golden gate opens not to the self-exalted. It is not lifted up to the proud in spirit. But the everlasting portals will open wide to the trembling touch of a little child. Blessed will be the recompense of grace to those who have wrought for God in the simplicity of faith and love."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 404.

I remember an earnest Indian girl in our Lucknow girls'

school some years ago in India. The school was for Hindustani, Maratha, and Punjabi girls. There were but a few of them from each of these language areas. They came mostly from village homes, where incomes were at a minimum. Even the most affluent of parents gave their daughters no more than a rupee (32 cents) pocket money each month. Most did not have any pocket money whatever. Even those who could occasionally indulge had but little to spend. They were dependent upon the mission and the missionaries for support while they were in school. At home they were fortunate if they had one good meal each day. Yet that entire body of forty-five girls, whose daily food consisted of two small but nourishing meals a day, made request of the woman principal that they be permitted to go without one of their meals for one month, and that the cost of the other meal each day be given them weekly for mission offerings for Sabbath school. Reluctant, because she knew how little they had to sustain them but recognizing their earnest desire to help, the principal decided to see how it worked out. Not one seemed to suffer from the shortened diet, and a happier group of girls could be found nowhere, as week by week they were able to drop their offerings into the envelope.

Later one of these girls, who had changed from a hot-tempered lass, who had apparently had much of her own way in the village home of her parents, to one of the most likable girls in the school, came to her principal with a personal request. She had become a real helper: besides carrying her regular school-work—she was then in the upper grades—she was now serving as a student teacher to the younger children, and doing her share of the dormitory duties. The school carried on a bit of industrial work, and some of the girls were earning part of their way through by this means. This busy pupil asked to be given two hours of extra work, so that she could earn the two-cents-an-hour wage paid. Why did she want the money? She did not find it possible to give all that she desired to give in mission offerings. Permitted thus to augment her income, she gave every extra penny she earned to the Sabbath school for the rest of the year.

It is no wonder that, where such a spirit exists, the Southern Asia Division, where this took place, and in which many similar examples of sacrifice might be recorded, stands near the top in per-capita giving through the Sabbath school, in spite of the direct poverty in the homes of the majority of the members.

The following from the messenger of the Lord tells the secret of true service and sacrifice: "It is not the length of time we labor, but our willingness and fidelity in the work, that makes it acceptable to God. In all our service a full surrender of self is demanded. The smallest duty done in sincerity and self-forgetfulness, is more pleasing to God than the greatest work when marred by self-seeking. He looks to see how much of the spirit of Christ we cherish, and how much of the likeness of Christ our work reveals. He regards more the love and faithfulness with which we work than the amount we do."—*Ibid.*, p. 402. When Christians give themselves wholeheartedly to the service of the Master, the results will be seen in souls saved, in sacrificial giving, in love toward their fellow men.

It is as true today as in the day when the apostle Paul penned these lines to the church in Corinth that "he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9:6, 7. A gift made with regret and a feeling of loss is truly no gift at all. A gift, to be of value, must give a lift of soul to the giver as well as to the receiver. Writing of the quality of mercy, Shakespeare said:

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd,  
It droppeth as the gentle dews of heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

These words are likewise true concerning our gifts to others and to the Most High. These are twice blessed, blessing both the giver and the receiver. True giving is inspired by love, expects no material return, rejoices in the happiness it brings to others.

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. God gave Jesus freely, willingly, for man's salvation. When we give to the cause of God we are truly giving only when we give joyfully with all our hearts. "God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9:7. A gift grudgingly given to the cause of God does not bring a blessing in return, but is in reality a curse to the giver. No blessing can come from it.

Sometimes we are solicited for funds for some public purpose concerning which we know but little. Either those who are promoting it fail to make their objectives clear and appealing, or the entire enterprise is hardly known in the community. We see others giving, and feel obligated to add our contribution. But for us there is no uplift, and about the only satisfaction that comes to us is in deducting the amount from our income tax returns. If we had understood and had felt the need, we would have had a real lift of spirit from the pleasure of helping some cause or person who was worthy.

Recently a child fell down an abandoned but unprotected well shaft in California. Her cries were heard, and the news of her imprisonment was flashed to all parts of the North American continent. Help was immediately rushed from near-by areas. Men worked feverishly day and night drilling a parallel shaft from which they hoped to break through into the well shaft before the rising water should engulf the child. Money flowed in from all directions to pay expenses and help where financial assistance was needed. There was a spontaneous, heartfelt expression of love and compassion that brought comfort and cheer to two heartbroken parents who in the end saw the lifeless body of their little one brought to the surface. The love and sympathy that lay behind the gifts sent to these suffering parents were of more value than the gifts. No one suffered from the giving; rather in the hearts of the givers there was an upsurge of joy that will never be forgotten. And the sorrowing parents, when they had laid their little one to rest, found comfort in applying the thousands of dollars sent to them to a fund for the aid of

other little folk to protect their lives from unseen danger. Such gifts, whether to individuals or to a cause which we have learned to know, to understand, and to love, bring a priceless blessing to the giver. However, to the receiver it may be the means of temporal or spiritual salvation.

*Prepare for God's "Well Done"*

Paul, in writing to Timothy, gave him a charge for those to whom God had entrusted much of this world's goods. Said the apostle: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. 6:17-19.

"God desires us to choose the heavenly in place of the earthly. He opens before us the possibilities of a heavenly investment. He would give encouragement to our loftiest aims, security to our choicest treasure. He declares, 'I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.' When the riches that moth devours and rust corrupts shall be swept away, Christ's followers can rejoice in their heavenly treasure, the riches that are imperishable. . . . Then let your property go beforehand to heaven. Lay up your treasure beside the throne of God. Make sure your title to the unsearchable riches of Christ."—*Ibid.*, pp. 374, 375.

While the apostle worked with his hands for the support of his physical needs, there were some who saw his earnestness, his unselfish ministry, and determined to bring assistance to him to relieve him of part of his burdens and anxieties. Among these was the little church at Philippi. Paul recognized loyalty and selflessness, and commended them: "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye

sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:15-19.

Not only was Paul grateful for all that the Philippians had sent him for his comfort and support; but he was assured, according to verse 19, that all *their* needs would be supplied by God in return for their devotion to him, the prisoner of the Lord, in Rome. Paul thus stated an unchanging truth. On those who use the gifts received day by day from the hands of their Creator to help forward the cause of God, or to assist those who are in real need, God bestows richly of His blessings and more than repays them for their apparent sacrifices. How many there are who will tell you, should you inquire, that as they have paid a full tithe of their income and have increased their gifts, God has repaid them manyfold by increased income, by making the little they have go farther, and by placing them in situations advantageous to their increasing prosperity! God richly rewards all those who follow the divine pattern for helping where there is real need.

### *Rewards Contingent Upon Faithful Performance of Duty*

As a basis for giving rewards Heaven holds a standard altogether different from what men do. Not how much men have accomplished, not how many days, months, or years they have labored, but with what spirit they have entered upon the labor required, and how faithfully they have toiled while engaged in the service of the Master is the important factor. The Saviour illustrated this principle by a very interesting parable. The master of the vineyard went out very early in the morning into the market place to hire laborers for service in his vineyard. He engaged a group at this time on the basis of a penny a day for the reward of their services. Again at the third, sixth, and ninth hours he found and hired workers, making the same financial

arrangements with them as with the first group. At the eleventh hour still another group who had been found standing idly in the market place were hired, with the promise that he would give them what was right.

At the close of the day the master of the vineyard called them all together, and, beginning with the last ones hired, paid them their wages. The eleventh-hour employees received the same wage that had been promised to those hired in the early morning, as did all the others who had labored. But those who had labored the entire day murmured against the master of the vineyard, saying, "These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." Matt. 20:12-16. In this last sentence the meaning of the parable is summed up. Many will be called into the service of the Master. Some will work through weary hours, days, and years. They will have borne the burden and heat of the day. There are some who will not have heard His call to service till the last hours of earth's history. They have not been "hired" till then. And when the Lord bestows the rewards of service upon all His children, it will be the spirit of the service rendered, not the length, nor yet the burdens borne, that will decide whether we enter into His everlasting kingdom.

With what spirit do we relate ourselves to the service of the Master? Are we in His service for the rewards to be obtained therefrom? If so, we shall surely be among the class who murmur when others who received the invitation at the eleventh hour are given the same rewards that we obtain. It was only when the apostles had been truly converted, when they had ceased striving for the preferred place, when their first thought was of winning men to Christ, that they served their Master with ever-

increasing success. Then they had come to the place in their Christian experience where they could say with the apostle Paul: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 1 Cor. 2:2-5.

"O, how different are the standards by which God and men measure character. God sees many temptations resisted of which the world, and even near friends, never know,—temptations in the home, in the heart. He sees the soul's humility in view of its own weakness; the sincere repentance over even a thought that is evil. He sees the whole-hearted devotion to His service. He has noted the hours of hard battle with self,—battle that won the victory. All this God and angels know. A book of remembrance is written before Him for them that fear the Lord and that think upon His name."—*Ibid.*, pp. 403, 404.

It is in the spirit of sacrifice that men truly labor for the Master. That spirit brings men to self-forgetfulness and fullness of loyalty. They are happy only if they can be among them that serve, even as Christ, who said, "I am among you as he that serveth." Luke 22:27. And again, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." John 6:38.

### *He Will Claim His Own*

Said the psalmist concerning the selfless, faithful ones, "Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Ps. 50:5. These are the saints, and it is the saints who will be gathered at the coming of the Lord. They are not only selfless servants of God but men and women who keep His commandments, and have implicit faith in His promises, who patiently wait the fulfillment of His promises.

When the day arrives when God will render to every man



according to his deeds (Rom. 2:6), He will give "to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." Verse 7. It is those who by "patient continuance in well doing," who have sought by righteous living, by patient continuance in humble service for Christ, by loving ministry to others, by obedience and full loyalty to the law of God, on whom eternal life will be bestowed. The reward will be given to "every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12.

"There are many who have given themselves to Christ, yet who see no opportunity of doing a large work or making great sacrifices in His service. These may find comfort in the thought that it is not necessarily the martyr's self-surrender which is most acceptable to God; it may not be the missionary who has daily faced danger and death, that stands highest in heaven's records. The Christian who is such in his private life, in the daily surrender of self, in sincerity of purpose and purity of thought, in meekness under provocation, in faith and piety, in fidelity in that which is least, the one who in the home life represents the character of Christ,—such a one may in the sight of God be more precious than even the world-renowned missionary or martyr."—*Ibid.*, p. 403.

Paul speaks of all Christians as "workers together with Him [Christ]." 2 Cor. 6:1. Again he asserts to the Christians at Corinth, "We are labourers together with God." 1 Cor. 3:9. God gave His great gift of life eternal in Jesus Christ our Lord. In Christ we are assured of a place in the kingdom. How deep should be the gratitude of our hearts for the blessings thus bestowed! It should make us willing partners of the Master, toiling with Him, sacrificing with and for Him, suffering with Him in travail for lost humanity. This is our priceless privilege, not merely our duty.

If we have known God as it is our privilege to know Him, we shall assuredly have life eternal, for this promise was made by the Saviour while He was still with His disciples. Said He, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true

God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. In that last great day, when the cases of men have been decided, those who in humbleness of spirit have walked with God, have dealt justly with their fellow men, and have been kind and loving and merciful, will have met the requirements for life eternal and will be ready to meet their Lord. (Micah 6:8.) God will claim them as His own. Of them, in the sermon on the mount, the Saviour said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit"; "blessed are the meek"; "blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness"; "blessed are the pure in heart"; "blessed are the peace-makers"; "blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake"; "ye are the light of the world"; and "be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5:3-10, 14, 48.

The blessings to be bestowed upon those who have been faithful stewards may be yours. No one is cut off from all the fullness of these blessings, except those who choose to reject service and sacrifice with Christ. But let us not forget that those who are gathered in the last great day, the saints of God, are those who have kept their covenant with God by sacrifice.

"THE Lord will withdraw His blessing where selfish interests are indulged in any phase of the work; but He will put His people in possession of good throughout the whole world, if they will use it for the uplifting of humanity. The experience of apostolic days will come to us when we wholeheartedly accept God's principle of benevolence,—consent in all things to obey the leadings of His Holy Spirit."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 146.

"In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained all of heaven's resources. . . .

"It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. . . .

"When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fulness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ, revealed in the life, testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 419, 420.

"When the heart is stirred by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and a vow is made to give a certain amount, the one who vows has no longer any right to the consecrated portion. Promises of this kind made to men would be looked upon as binding; are those not more binding that are made to God? Are promises tried in the court of conscience less binding than written agreements of men?"—*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 74.

# Divinely Endowed for Stewardship

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AS LONG as the nature of man remains in its sinful condition, there will be a battle raging in the hearts of men. The Spirit of God will seek to drive out the lusts of the flesh, and the desires of wayward hearts will wage relentless battle against the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. Paul expresses the thought in Galatians 5:17 in these words: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Satan has been in conflict with God ever since he was cast out of heaven. He has sought to bring about the disobedience and downfall of every human being born into this world since Adam transgressed. The inherited and cultivated weaknesses to which man is heir by nature make each succeeding generation the easy and lawful prey of their wily adversary. The father of lies seeks by deceit and cunning to persuade men that right is wrong and wrong is right. In most instances he succeeds all too well.

"It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues

His chosen people to Himself."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

God revealed His will to mankind through holy men of old to whom He had made known the Scriptures of truth. By His Holy Spirit He speaks through the written Word to everyone who will peruse and heed the instruction therein. To every soul who will accept the teachings of the Bible, seeking to follow the recorded instruction, God through His Holy Spirit will give spiritual power to enable him to resist the temptations of the evil one. He will give strength to conquer every temptation to yield to false philosophy. Had Eve kept close to Adam, and had both held close communion with their Maker, sin would never have entered the lives of the human family. If men today would at the first whisper of temptation flee to the Source of their strength, they would not fall before the fiery darts of the evil one.

Even when weakness develops into transgression and failure, God still loves His wayward children, for we read, "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved)." Eph. 2:4, 5. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8. God stands ready not only to forgive but to bestow such resources of power in our lives that we can triumph over every human weakness, and come off more than conquerors through Christ Jesus.

As the conflict between good and evil, between the love of Christ and the malignant enmity of Satan, rages in the lives of men, the eyes of God's great universe are centered on the battle. They await with breathless interest the outcome of a conflict that will justify the cause of Heaven, and bring about the destruction of all those who cling to sin and rebellion. The sacrifice made upon the cross of Calvary, that expression of unmeasured love for all mankind, is evidence of God's desire to save men. Not one soul who places his trust wholly in Him will fail to enter the family of God and the glorious inheritance of the saints.

Every day and hour the gracious Saviour stands at the door of the human heart. The hand that bears the nailprints of the

cross of Calvary knocks on the door that none can enter without an invitation from within; and His heart of love speaks, saying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Rev. 3:20.

The Saviour "is not repulsed by scorn or turned aside by threatening, but continually seeks the lost ones, saying, 'How shall I give thee up?' Although His love is driven back by the stubborn heart, He returns to plead with greater force, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.'"—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 235.

It is a source of comfort to know that our Saviour is not rebuffed by the soul's indifference but continues to plead with our hearts. We may have wandered far from God, may have refused His proffers of pardon and mercy, yet by means of His Holy Spirit, the Comforter, Christ seeks to enter the human heart, to transform and change it into the likeness of Himself, making it fit to represent His holy character before the world.

### *Christ Desires to Dwell Within Us*

Speaking of His desire to dwell with His earthbound children, Christ told His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." John 14:16-20.

Herein is a wonderful promise, a marvelous picture of the loving-kindness and compassion of our Saviour. He knew human weaknesses, having been "in all points tempted like as we are." He knew the desire of man to be good in spite of his inherited tendencies to do evil. He recognized man's need for help that must come from outside of himself, for Christ had received that help from His Father throughout His life and ministry; and

although tempted as we are He was without sin. He had yielded His heart and life to His Father, and had been empowered to live a sinless life among men, though He had the same weaknesses by inheritance that we do. He was to return to His Father, to enter upon that ministry that was His as God's only begotten Son. He desired to continue to teach, to comfort, and to minister to humanity's needs. No longer able to be present personally with His brethren on earth, He made provision for their help by sending His personal representative the Holy Spirit, who, He said, shall "guide you into all truth: . . . and He will shew you things to come." John 16:13. When Christ was ready to leave His disciples He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." Verse 7. Christ in human form could not be everywhere present to teach, to guide, to empower His disciples for the immense task committed to them. But when He had returned to His Father He could send the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, to be the comforter and helper of all the disciples. For this reason Christ could say to them, "The world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." With Christ's departure He would send the Holy Spirit who would come into the life of the individual Christian and empower him so to live, labor, and sacrifice as to represent Christ's character to the transformation of thousands of human lives.

"The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this Satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fulness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's

Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

### *The Mystery of the Spirit's Power*

Man cannot comprehend the working of the Holy Spirit upon human hearts. His operation in your life or mine, or in the lives of millions who have been led by His influence into surrender to the claims of Christ, is a mystery. Nicodemus did not comprehend the work of the Holy Spirit when the Saviour explained it by saying, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3:7, 8. No wonder that Nicodemus exclaimed, "How can these things be?" Verse 9. Nor is it to be wondered at that in Christ's response to Nicodemus' questioning exclamation, He said, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" Verse 12. We fail to grasp the significance of the working of the Holy Spirit upon human life. We see the transformation of the life, the rightabout-face of the soul converted and drawn into following the Saviour; we see and hear of whole families, sometimes whole communities, being transformed and beginning a new life; but who can explain the influences, the deep spiritual yearnings, the triumphant victories over evil habits, the higher outlook on life, the patience, the kindness, the love, and the self-sacrifice that the influence of the Holy Spirit has had upon the lives of those involved! Thank God for the gift, for the changes that have been wrought, for the power to resist temptation and to come off more than conqueror in Christ Jesus. And "it doth not yet appear what we shall be" under the Spirit's guidance, but we know that when we have seen Him who sent the Comforter to us, "we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2.



Some idea of the power and influence of the Holy Spirit as He comes to dwell in the human heart and manifest Himself in the life, is given us in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. We read, "He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. 3:16-19. When the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our hearts by faith, Christ makes His love, His power, and His character manifest in and through us. It must be this working of the Holy Spirit that takes the heathen out of the habits of his past life, that raises him in character and attainments to the place where, under trial, he lives and serves his fellow men and his God, even as Christ in love served those who persecuted Him. It was this indwelling Christ, the Spirit of the living God, which gave power to Kata Ragoso in the Solomons to endure merciless beating and to carry on as a true servant of Jesus without hatred for those who so cruelly and unjustly treated him. It was the Holy Spirit, ministering in the lives of Christ's servants, that held the newly converted savages of the Admiralty Group true to God through months of mistreatment by the enemy in World War II, and inspired them to do all in their power to bring relief, at the risk of their own lives, to Allied troops who otherwise would have died. Under the leadership of Robert Salau, a son of head-hunting savages from the Solomon Islands, these same men and women were instrumental in saving the lives of around five hundred soldiers.

The Holy Spirit, sent to prepare men for the inevitable conflicts between good and evil in the closing days of earth's history, held men true to their faith and loyal to God in Japan, Korea, China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma, European lands, and numerous other places where the forces of evil were at work. Some were slain; others endured long imprisonment, semistarvation, physical suffering, and tortures unspeakable, but still main-

tained their allegiance to God. They do not parade their loyalty; too often their deeds of faith and courage are quickly forgotten as event follows event in great rapidity toward the inevitable end of all things in this world. But we who are children of faith need to keep the deeds of God's faithful ones constantly before us, and to dedicate our lives to His service so that the same fullness of the character of Jesus will develop in us.

Again Paul calls our attention to the ultimate goal of the Holy Spirit as He works upon human hearts. The gift of the Spirit is for a definite purpose. "For the perfecting of the saints, for [some versions give "unto"] the work of the ministry, for ["unto"] the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4:12, 13. As the church members, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, come into the fullness of Christ, in character, in service, and in sacrifice, they will be prepared for the coming of the Lord Jesus in glory and for the establishment of His kingdom. Every gift of His Spirit, every talent He enables us to develop and to use for the furtherance of His gospel, is for this specific purpose to make the church ready for the coming of their Lord.

The greatest diligence should be shown by Christians lest we should grieve the Holy Spirit and drive Him from our lives. This is essential to every one of us. From the least to the greatest we are still under temptation by the wily deceiver and by his emissaries. He sees that every weakness is exploited, every tendency to worldliness encouraged. He watches to catch the unwary. With some it may be a quick temper that lets him pass the portals of the heart; with another, a selfish desire for preferment, or to dominate in the home, in the marriage relationship, in the church, in social life, in our associations with those about us. It may be that our weakness is in criticizing others, even those whom God has placed in leadership in the church, forgetful of the fact that the leaders, frail and erring as they often show themselves, are ordained of God. It is He that setteth up kings

and casteth down kings. All things are in His hands, and He ruleth over all. We are so impatient to have things go as we think they should go. Whatever may be the sin that doth so easily beset us, by the indulgence of that sin we may easily do that which the apostle warns against, and, temporarily at least, drive the Spirit out of our hearts. He admonishes, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. 4:30. Sin separates man from God. The Holy Spirit cannot dwell in a heart into which sin is permitted to come and find lodging. Let us, therefore, "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." Heb. 12:1, 2.

*Empowered to Finish the Work Assigned Us*

When Peter was thrice asked by his Master whether he loved Him, Peter replied more and more vehemently that he loved the Lord, and added on the third occasion, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love Thee." John 21:17. But Christ added at the close of the last answer, "Follow Me." Peter had been previously admonished, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:32.

Before the Saviour ascended to heaven, He gave those who followed Him a farewell message and instructions: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:7, 8. They had been instructed (verse 4) that they should not depart from Jerusalem till that empowering Spirit had been bestowed upon them. They remained, according to the Saviour's command, praying and seeking to understand more fully the will of God concerning them. On the day of Pentecost that for which they had prayed and waited came. With mighty power the Holy Spirit, descending in the form of flames of fire, took hold of their lives, and sent

them forth to preach, to live, to minister to others in behalf of their risen Lord; and thousands were converted in a day. (Acts 2:1-4, 41.) This was only the beginning. Each day there were added to the church "such as should be saved." Verse 47. Shortly they went forth into the regions round about them, and great grace was upon them all. All they had of this world's goods, together with their personal lives, was dedicated to the one supreme purpose of carrying out their Lord's command. The sick were healed (Acts 4:8-10); the believers were of one heart and one mind (verses 31, 32); the church was organized not only to preach the gospel and to heal the sick but to care for those of its number who were in need (Acts 6:1-8). So powerful did the influence of the church become in Jerusalem that persecution broke out in fury, and many fled, carrying the message of Jesus the Saviour to the regions beyond.

"What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost? The glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the uttermost parts of the inhabited world. As the disciples proclaimed the message of redeeming grace, hearts yielded to the power of this message. The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners united with believers in seeking the pearl of great price. Some who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions. . . . Every Christian saw in his brother a revelation of divine love and benevolence. One interest prevailed; one subject of emulation swallowed up all others. The ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character, and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom. . . .

"Under their labors were added to the church chosen men, who, receiving the word of truth, consecrated their lives to the work of giving to others the hope that filled their hearts with peace and joy. They could not be restrained or intimidated by threatenings. The Lord spoke through them, and as they went from place to place, the poor had the gospel preached to them, and miracles of divine grace were wrought."—*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 48.

All this was in fulfillment of the words of the prophet Joel, who had predicted, "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit." Joel 2:28, 29.

As in the days of the apostles, these words were fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the early rain, so when the coming of the Lord in glory is about to take place the latter rain will fall. Yet the "Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love."—*Ibid.*, p. 49.

Today we are living just before the coming of the Son of man in glory. The latter rain in a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit can be expected by the children of God for the finishing of the work. As the early rain empowered them to carry the gospel with mighty power, so today the same power can be expected, only in greater measure. We are told:

"Near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest 'in the time of the latter rain.' . . .

"Every worker who follows the example of Christ will be prepared to receive and use the power that God has promised to His church for the ripening of earth's harvest. Morning by morning, as the heralds of the gospel kneel before the Lord, and renew their vows of consecration to Him, He will grant them the presence of His Spirit, with its reviving, sanctifying power. As they go forth to the day's duties, they have the assurance that the unseen agency of the Holy Spirit enables them to be 'laborers together with God.'"—*Ibid.*, pp. 55, 56.

The keynote of every believer's life will be the extension of the invitation to honest souls to partake of the water of life freely. God has provided it. The Spirit is pleading, and the bride says, Come. Everyone who hears is to repeat the message; and everyone who thirsts, every honest, seeking heart, is invited to join in seeking "first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." Matt. 6:33.

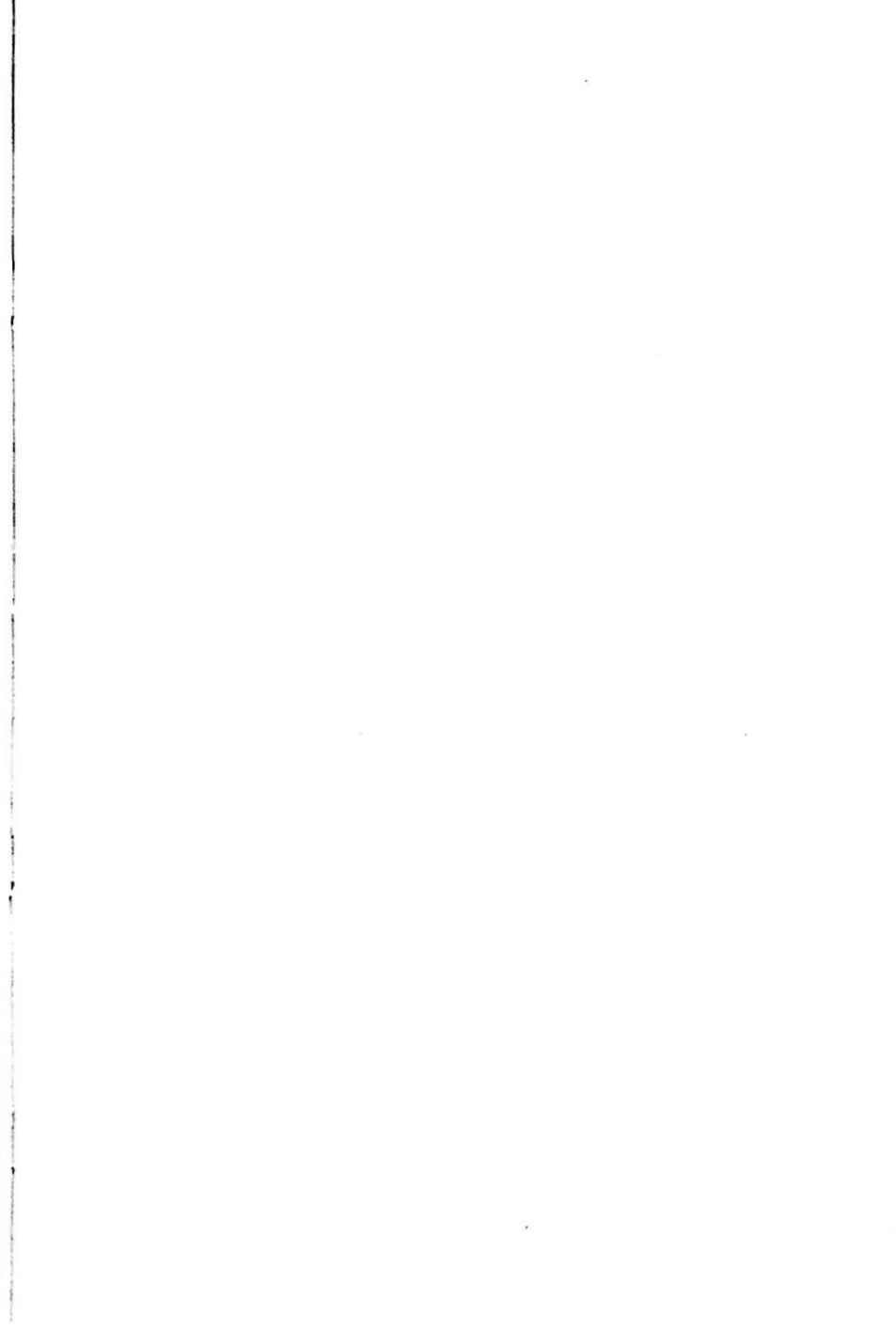
"Everyone who hears, is to repeat the invitation. Whatever one's calling in life, his first interest should be to win souls for Christ. He may not be able to speak to congregations, but he can work for individuals. . . .

"The disciples were to begin their work where they were. The hardest and most unpromising field was not to be passed by. So every one of Christ's workers is to begin where he is. In our own families may be souls hungry for sympathy, starving for the bread of life. There may be children to be trained for Christ. There are heathen at our very doors. Let us do faithfully the work that is nearest. Then let our efforts be extended as far as God's hand may lead the way. . . .

"The command, 'Go ye into all the world,' is not to be lost sight of. We are called upon to lift our eyes to the 'regions beyond.' Christ tears away the wall of partition, the dividing prejudice of nationality, and teaches a love for all the human family. He lifts men from the narrow circle which their selfishness prescribes; He abolishes all territorial lines and artificial distinctions of society. He makes no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. He teaches us to look upon

every needy soul as our brother, and the world as our field."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 822, 823.

It will take fullness of consecration to meet the mind of Christ. It will demand a broader outlook as we lift up our eyes to the fields that are ripe already to harvest. Our human sympathies will deepen till every soul in need will be regarded as our brother. Our lives will have but one supreme purpose: to live, to serve, to give, till no one can say, "I did not know," till every soul has heard the gracious invitation to enter into the family of God. The Holy Spirit awaits our demand and reception. In Him is power for witnessing. Let us seek Him while He may be found.





"THE eye of God takes cognizance of every farthing devoted to His cause, and of the willingness or reluctance of the giver. The motive in giving is also chronicled. Those self-sacrificing, consecrated ones who render back to God the things that are His, as He requires of them, will be rewarded according to their works."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 519.

"God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. 'Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.' Phil. 1:29. And of all the gifts that heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 225.

"If the hearts of God's people were filled with love for Christ; if every church-member were thoroughly imbued with the Spirit of self-sacrifice; if all manifested thorough earnestness, there would be no lack of funds for home or foreign missions. Our resources would be multiplied; a thousand doors of usefulness would be opened, and we should be invited to enter. Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 450.

# The Triumphs of Faithful Stewardship

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IN THE very nature of man there dwells, because of his inherited weaknesses, a tendency to worry about his future. He looks forward with foreboding to what he may have to meet, and he plans for the future as best he can with his finite wisdom.

Christ's disciples were perplexed about their future when, as He had told them, He would return to His Father, and they should see Him no more in human form. For this reason He reassured them, knowing that His words would be long remembered and cherished by them in the years of their own service for Him. Said He, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3. How cheering to the troubled disciples must have been this promise! The separation would not be forever. The hour would come when again they would see their Master's face and hear His melodious voice. They believed His promise, and each of them in his recorded utterances has spoken of the blessed hope that sprang up in his heart. Matthew dwells upon His appearing in glory, and records the Saviour's words that tell of the signs that would make known the nearness of that great

event. (Matthew 24.) John mentions it. (John 14; Revelation 6; 14; 21; 22.) Mark records it (Mark 13), and Luke speaks at length of the signs that would indicate that Christ's appearing in glory was near at hand (Luke 21). Peter warns of conditions in the spiritual and physical world preceding Christ's appearing, and of the Christian's need to be ready. (2 Peter 3:1-14.) James counsels patience in the midst of trouble and confederacy just before His appearing. Paul, who found his Lord on the Damascus road, recounts again and again the promises of, and his confidence in, the blessed hope. Among his words that have brought comfort to hundreds of thousands through the centuries are those found in his recorded utterances and in his numerous epistles to the churches. Among the most beautiful of these is his description of the translation of the living and of the resurrection of the dead in Christ at His coming. (1 Cor. 15:51-57.) In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 he again depicts this scene, and urges that all the saints should comfort one another with this blessed hope. Perhaps his most touching reference to the second coming of his Lord was written near the close of his long life of faithful service for His Master, when he wrote to Timothy concerning his own spiritual condition and ended with these ringing words: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." 2 Tim. 4:8.

Nor are the disciples alone in rejoicing in the blessed hope of Christ's second coming. David speaks of it: "Our Lord shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Ps. 50:3-5.

The hour is near when Christ will return. Every sign that He gave in His discourses while on earth has, with one exception, been fulfilled. When He appears His faithful ones, consecrated, pure, and holy, a righteous nation, will be gathered from the four corners of the earth. To them His coming will be a joyful event.

Of that day the prophet Isaiah writes, "It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9. But there will be no joy in the hearts of the unbelieving, the rebellious, and the unfaithful, for we are told concerning them: "The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman and every free man hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 6:15-17.

What a contrast! God's children, their lives cleansed by the blood of their Redeemer, welcome the coming Saviour with gladness and overflowing joy. The fearful and the unbelieving, among whom are all classes of society from the king and the dictator who have reveled in their great power and have ruled the nations, down to the slave in his physical servitude—all await Christ's appearing with dread and fear, and wish for the mountains to hide them from the vengeance of an outraged Creator, whom they have openly defied or wantonly ignored.

The called in that day will be those who have given their all in Christ's service—time, money, comfort, and home life. Giving themselves to whatever Christ may have called them, they have known and manifested the true spirit of sacrifice. Each one will have entered into the life and spirit of the Master, and will have thus prepared to welcome Him. They are ready to dwell with Him in His kingdom.

### *Pilgrims and Strangers on the Earth*

All too often in this world these faithful ones have known no fixed abiding place. They have dedicated their lives to making known their Lord, willing to go anywhere and do any service for Him. They, by their lives, "confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth," declaring "plainly that they seek a

country." Heb. 11:13, 14. Now they are ready to welcome their Saviour and to enter into His rest. "They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." Verse 16.

In writing to his spiritual son, Titus, Paul says, "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:12, 13. The hope of Christ's second appearing is indeed a "blessed hope" to those who live sober, godly lives in this world. But a love of the world, a yielding to the "lust of the flesh," and an indulgence in the "pride of life" will inevitably shut one off from a realization of the "blessed hope" of Christ's appearing. Too many, even among professing Christians, have set their eyes on things of earth and have failed to see cause for real rejoicing at the thought of Christ's imminent appearing. In every life the evidence that this hope exists, makes itself manifest in the daily acts, and not merely in the occasional public expression of that hope.

"Nevertheless we [those whose hearts and lives are hid with Christ in God], according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13. Peter had just been recounting God's plans for His people in the closing days of earth's history. He had mentioned the certainty of the coming of the Lord, the destruction of the earth by fire, the willing ignorance of men who closed their minds to the plain predictions of God's Word, and he closes by saying, "nevertheless we." Yes, we who love and fear Him, who long to do His will, not only will be looking for His appearing but will rest assured of the certainty of a new heavens and a new earth which God mentions so frequently in His Word. (Isa. 11:1-9; 65:17-25; 66:22, 23; Revelation 21; 22:1-5, 14; 2 Peter 3:1-14.)

"In the earth made new, the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasures that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in

garden and field. . . . (Isa. 65:21, 22.) There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realized. And still there will appear new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects of study to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul. . . .

"To us who are standing on the very verge of their fulfillment, of what deep moment, what living interest, are these delineations of the things to come,—events for which, since our first parents turned their steps from Eden, God's children have watched and waited, longed and prayed!"—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 730, 731.

The inheritance of the saints, so beautifully described in Isaiah's prophecy, is beyond our finite comprehension or understanding. Only with the eye of faith, and in confidence of the fulfillment of the blessed hope, can we faintly envision its glorious beauty. After experiencing the wild, evil nature of man and beast in this world, we look forward with keen anticipation to a place of which it is said, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isa. 11:9. Who would not welcome a country where "the voice of weeping shall be no more heard . . . , nor the voice of crying"? Isa. 65:19. With what joy men redeemed will build and inhabit, with no fear of losing that which their toil has produced. How happily will the planting and harvesting be done when there is no fear of either man's taking over the crop, or destructive insects or other pests making our labors vain! (Isa. 65:21, 22.) In that blessed land "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. . . . Behold, I make all things new." Rev. 21:4, 5.

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. 22:14. Earlier in the book of the Revelation, John, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote to the seven

churches messages of reproof, of warning, sometimes of commendation, making promises to them and prefacing those promises in each case with the conditional thought, "To him that overcometh." The promises are to the faithful, the loyal, the obedient, to those who "by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality." Rom. 2:7. It is he who overcometh that "shall inherit all things" (Rev. 21:7); and "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, . . . but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (verse 27). No one but an overcomer, one who has won the victory over sin through the cleansing blood of Jesus our Saviour and through the power of the Holy Spirit, can enter the land wherein dwell the righteous. The transformation of character comes in this life, not for the glory and honor of the individual thus blessed, but to the praise and honor of Him who bestows the power for righteous living. Those who overcame, realizing their own inherent weakness, have thrown themselves on the tender mercy of a loving Father, have received His pardon, and are resting on His promises.

In his first epistle John holds up the standards essential to the Christian's becoming an overcomer, saying, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 John 2:15, 16. To overcome, then, means a complete dedication of the heart and life to the service of God, so that there will be no longing in the heart for fleshly indulgence, no feasting of the eyes in envy on the forbidden pleasures of this life, or no lifting up of the heart in pride of position or accomplishment. These are not of the Father but of this world.

On a certain occasion two men were speaking of their experience in connection with the cause of God. One was rejoicing at his privilege of having a humble place in the work, although he recognized that others might have done as well or better had it been God's will to call them to the same place of responsibility.

The other spoke of how well he had done, how rapidly he had risen from the ranks to his present position in denominational employ. Such pride of preferment is definitely ruled out by John's statement quoted in the preceding paragraph. And if we, individually, would study our own lives, our inmost thoughts, and our true relationship to a place among the saints, there would develop a feeling of such humility in our hearts that we would go to our knees in the secret chamber and confess our pride and worldliness. We could then go forth to face the world with the sure knowledge that we indeed represent the lowly Man of Galilee, with whom we someday hope to dwell.

The same apostle tells us how the power to overcome every evil trait of character is obtained. "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." 1 John 5:4, 5. Paul also states it on this wise: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15:57. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Rom. 8:37. In the Revelation we are assured that the saints overcame the temptations of the devil "by the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 12:11. We believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Our faith in His power to save and to keep us is the holding force of our lives as Christians. He gives us daily victory, for which we thank God; and, daily surrendering to the influence of His Spirit, we are more than conquerors. Although the evil one may come in like a flood, we shall be able to resist through "the blood of the Lamb." Christ is our personal Saviour. Looking unto Jesus, seeing Him in all His love and tenderness, His unyielding attitude toward the temptation to sin, His service and sacrifice for men individually and collectively, and having faith in His promise to go with us even unto the end, we are, and always may be, victorious.

What delights are assured to the overcomer! Not those sensual delights to which some religious faiths direct the ambitions of the faithful. No; the Christian's faith looks forward to life eternal,



where he can partake once more of the tree of life lost by Adam when he transgressed God's commands in the Garden of Eden. (Rev. 2:7). He sees the end of death, and knows that he need no longer fear that eternal sleep that comes when sin and sinners are totally destroyed. (Verse 11.) The saintly Christian, the overcomer, will eat of the hidden manna. (Verse 17.) God fed the hosts of Israel for forty years in the wilderness, raining down manna from heaven for their sustenance, and there was not a sickly one among them. What strength and power will come from partaking of the hidden manna which is promised to the overcomer! And to him will be given a white stone on which his new name is to be written, known only to himself and to his Father who bestows it. (Verse 17.) He is also promised power over the nations. (Verses 26, 27.) In the final judgment of the wicked the saints will participate, and they will witness the sentence of the righteous judge carried out upon those who have stubbornly refused the mercy of a righteous God.

The overcomer is promised that he will be clothed in white raiment; this, we are told (Rev. 19:8), is the righteousness of saints. Their names will be retained in the Lamb's book of life, and their record of victory will be proclaimed before the Father and before His angels. (Rev. 3:5.) His privileges do not end here, for every overcomer will become a pillar in the temple of God, never to be separated from his new and holy association. God's name, and the name of God's city, and Christ's new name will be written on them. They are stamped forever with the insignia of heaven, and will be known throughout God's great universe as children of the Most High. (Verse 12.) To make the scene complete and the rewards of victory what our Lord desires them to be, Christ makes the final glorious promise that the privilege that was His when He overcame shall be the privilege of His followers when they overcome: "To him . . . will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as also I overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." (Verse 21.) All these things are undeserved by anyone who has known the defeats that have come to us through the cunning of a deadly

foe. We have been saved from sin by a merciful and long-suffering Saviour, and have been empowered to overcome through faith in His cleansing blood and the gift of His Spirit's power. Wonderful condescension, marvelous grace, and infinite loving-kindness! Does it not thrill your soul and lead you to a dedication of every power of your being to the service of such a Lord and Master? Is any sacrifice too great that we may be privileged to partake of the overcomer's reward?

The blessed invitation to be among those who enter the kingdom as overcomers is given to every one who will become a lowly follower of Jesus. Says the king to those upon His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34. The story that reveals why and to whom the invitation is given is recorded in verses 35-40, where the closing words, so full of meaning, ring in our ears as we look out upon a world in direst need, not only of physical help but of spiritual healing. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Christ identifies Himself with every needy soul in this world. As we serve with Him we serve others about us and the world everywhere; everyone is our responsibility before our Lord. Then *overcoming* means feeding the hungry, quenching the thirst of the soul, caring for the needy, clothing the naked, visiting the prisoner, bringing help for this life and hope for the life to come to those who have lost, or have never before found, the way of life.

Never was there greater need for such ministry than exists today, not alone overseas where misery upon physical misery has become the lot of uncounted millions of suffering humanity. All about us are men who have lost all moral restraint, men who have given up in despair. Hundreds of thousands have left the teachings of the gospel and are in open transgression of the laws of God. Physical suffering normally marks the trail of these transgressors of the laws of God, yet there are no signs of remorse for the evils committed. The innocent suffer with the guilty. The sins of the fathers and mothers are visited upon their children,

and a great group of youth and children are turned loose to prey upon a hapless public, a public that little realizes its responsibility for the things from which it suffers and of which it complains. These youth and children often end their own careers behind prison bars or in corrective institutions.

Sickness and suffering and privation are everywhere. Every Christian has a plain duty to perform for those in need. "Inasmuch" applies to you, to me. We cannot escape responsibility if we are to be numbered with the overcomers and not with the transgressors; with the sheep and not with the goats; with those on His right hand, to whom the gracious invitation is given, "Come, ye blessed of My Father," and not with those on the left, who are sent away into "everlasting punishment." (Verse 46.)

Peter once said to the Lord, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake, and the gospel's but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." Mark 10:28-30. That the truth of these words may come home forcibly to us all, let us recount the fulfillment of this promise in connection with the onward progress of the third angel's message in all the world.

My wife and I were en route to a distant land, after having enjoyed a furlough among our brethren and sisters in the homeland. Throughout our stay at home we had found the hearts of our brethren and sisters kind, and they had given us an open-hearted welcome wherever we had gone. It would be impossible to recount in these pages their expressions of love. We had sought to make our stay in their midst as helpful and unencumbering as possible. Their hearts and homes were open everywhere. Then came the call to return to our field of labor. The ties that had become more than temporary were broken. We were urged to remain among the friends we had made. Duty seemed to indicate otherwise, and with sad hearts we left our brethren and sisters,

fathers and mothers, and children in Israel, sons and daughters of God, behind us; and once again we ventured forth in answer to God's call.

On our way to this new period of service overseas our ship stopped at numerous ports. On board ship were missionaries of various faiths. At our first port of call we went ashore to visit friends and brethren, and at their urgent invitation remained overnight, returning to our ship before it sailed. As in port after port we stopped off to see the brethren, and some of them would come to see us off on our journey, our missionary friends on shipboard remarked about it. Said they, "We do not understand it. Our church has workers in these ports. But this has never happened to us." We replied, "We are all one great family. Wherever we go we are accepted as brethren and sisters, and welcomed. European or native Christian, the warmth of love shown is the same." I have individually found it so, whether in an African kraal or an Indian village, an island home or a wattle thatch-roofed hut on the burning plains. Where the love of God is, there is home and family. "All ye are brethren" is true of the church of Jesus Christ. His assurance to the disciples of old is proved by the experience of today. May it ever be so in the remnant church.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2. "We shall be like Him." Today we see "through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Cor. 13:12. It is a blessed day that is just before us. Soon Jesus will come to take His faithful ones to that better country, where we shall see Him whom here we have loved and served. We shall see Him in all the glory of His power, in the loveliness of His character. We shall know at last all the riches of His grace and the unfathomed depths of His love. We cannot afford to miss that day of triumph when He shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. We must be there. Just a little longer to toil, to carry burdens that sometimes seem too heavy to be borne, to fulfill our covenant

with Him by sacrifice. At His coming the compensations assured the faithful will more than repay any apparent sacrifice. We shall bask in the sunshine of His presence, for the Lamb is the light of that better land. There is no night there, no darkness or hidden dangers lurking all about us. All is peace and happiness and joy. The battle is over; the victory has been won. And He, the center of our earthly life, is the inspiration of an eternal life about to begin. By His grace we will enter in, even though it be on the altar of supreme sacrifice.

These are the words of the messenger of the Lord: "Fellow pilgrims, we are still amid the shadows and turmoil of earthly activities; but soon our Saviour is to appear to bring deliverance and rest. Let us by faith behold the blessed hereafter, as pictured by the hand of God. He who died for the sins of the world, is opening wide the gates of Paradise to all who believe on Him. Soon the battle will have been fought, the victory won. Soon we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence the trials and sufferings of this life will seem as nothingness. The former things 'shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.' 'Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.' 'Israel shall be saved . . . with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.' (Isa. 65:17; Heb. 10:35-37; Isa. 45:17.)"—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 731, 732.



